



CONVEYING REWARDS TO THE DECEASED (ISAALE SAWAAB)

Allah – in the name of – the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

At the outset please know, that in Islam, death is not perceived as an end of life. It is just the end of the worldly existence as we witness it, and the beginning of a new existence, in which the soul experiences a new world called “Barzakh.” The soul may experience this new life with or without its original body, according to its own rank allotted to it by Allah the Almighty, the Supreme. There are too many proofs from the Holy Qur’an and Hadeeth (Holy Prophet’s Traditions) regarding the above, and warrant an extensive article on the same. But that is not the question here.

The question that some people ask is that if a person is dead, can we increase its status or decrease its torment by conveying rewards of OUR deeds?

It is the consensus of the Sahaba, the earlier Ulema, and the latter ones that the above is (a) Effective and that (b) it is certainly permissible, in fact meritorious, to do so.

If one wants to convey the reward of one's recital of Holy Qur’an, charity, Nafil Salaat (Non Obligatory), fasts and good deeds, Hajj, Umrah etc., then one should convey it to the virtuous soul of our beloved Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), one's relatives, and all the Muslim men and women. All of them will receive the same reward without any deduction; the one who has carried this out will also receive the same reward without any loss. It is also valid to convey the reward to the living persons. (Fatawa Shami).

Before we back up the above statements with several proofs from the Holy Qur’an and Hadeeth, we should, as a matter of justice, look into the objections brought against the above belief.

Those who object to this act, cite the following verse from the Holy Qur’an:
“And that man will not obtain anything except what he strove for?” (Najm 53:39)

They allege that the above verse clarifies that none of our deeds can benefit one who has passed away. Such a view is incorrect. Firstly, this Ayah exhorts people to remember that good deeds will bring good results and evil deeds, an evil result. So they must always persist in seeking good. And that that they must not simply depend on other people’s prayers. Secondly, most scholars are of the opinion that the message in this verse is abrogated by the verse: **“And those who believe and whose families follow them in Faith, -- to them We shall join their families: nor shall We deprive them of the fruit of anything of their works: yet each individual is in pledge for his deeds”** (Toor 52:21).” This verse enters the children into Paradise because of the righteousness of the parents.

They also cite a famous Hadeeth from Muslim Shareef:-

Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying: When a man dies, his acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (for the deceased).

Please closely examine the above Hadeeth. The words say “his acts” (except three) come to an end. What comes to an end, then, is the deceased person's own actions. This does not mean that a dead person does not benefit from anything else. He cannot increase his own reward by any new act (even if he prays or does Zikr in the grave, as proven from various Hadeeth). But his reward can go on increasing because of the prayers of his son.

The above Hadeeth therefore cannot be quoted in support of the argument that our actions cannot benefit those who are dead. In fact, it supports the case for conveying rewards to the dead!

Also note that the actions and beliefs of none else than the beloved Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) are proof of their wrong opinion. And also against their narrow minded opinion are the actions and beliefs of none else than the great Sahaba (Allah be well pleased with them).

Having negated the objections, we bring forth for your perusal several proofs from the Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth supporting the act of conveying rewards to those who passed away before us.

A. PROOFS FROM HOLY QUR'AN

Verse 1

And those who came after them say, "O our Lord! Forgive us, and our brothers who accepted faith before us, and do not keep any malice in our hearts towards the believers – O our Lord! Indeed You only are the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful." (Hashr 59:10)

Note that the above verse is a very strong evidence of the practice of the Sahaba, which was so loved by Allah that it is part of the Holy Qur'an. Why would the Sahaba pray for the deceased people if their prayer was of no benefit? And to top it all, Allah the Almighty has approved and praised their action!

Verse 2

"O our Lord! And forgive me, and my parents, and all the Muslims on the day when the account will be established." (Ibrahim 14:41)

The benefit of the above verse is obvious. The prayer of Prophet Syedna Ibrahim (peace be upon him), includes all believers – right from the beginning i.e. those before him, and till the end of this world i.e. even those who are not yet born. Al Hamdo Lillah! And this prayer is often made in the last part (Qaadah) of our Salaat.

Verse 3

And those who believe and whose families follow them in Faith, -- to them We shall join their families; nor shall We deprive them of the fruit of anything of their works: yet each individual is in pledge for his deeds. (Toor 52:21)."

This verse says that children will be admitted into Paradise because of the righteousness of the parents.

Verse 4

And lower your wing humbly for them, with mercy, and pray, "My Lord! Have mercy on them both, the way they nursed me when I was young." (Bani Israel 17:24)

This verse is in fact a command from Allah for all believers to seek mercy for their parents. So what is your opinion? Will not the command of Allah hold any benefit for the deceased parent?? It certainly does.

Also note that there are several other verses from the Holy Qur'an that teach us to pray, and the prayer includes all Muslim brothers & sisters (living, passed away or yet to be borne).

Readers are requested to reflect on the fact that the above verses are part of the Holy Qur'an – they are read perhaps millions of times every day all over the world, as part of regular recitation, and also as Qirat within Salaat, and also as prayer in the last part (Qaadah) of Salaat.

B. PROOFS FROM THE HADEETH

GENERAL PERMISSIONS (HADEETH # 1 - 4)

Hadeeth 1

Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying: When a man dies, his acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (for the deceased). (Muslim)

Hadeeth 2

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "What is credited to a believer of his action and good deed after his death is any useful knowledge he might have taught or spread, a Allah-fearing child he might have left behind, a copy of the Qur'an he might have left to an heir, a mosque he might have built, a house he might have dedicated for use by travelers, a stream or river he might have caused to run, a donation to charity (i.e. sadaqah) he might have set aside when he was enjoying good health. All that catches up with him after his death." (Ibn Majah)

Hadeeth 3

Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'Aas (Allah be well pleased with him): Al-'As ibn Wa'il left his will that a hundred slaves should be emancipated on his behalf. His son Hisham emancipated fifty slaves and his son Amr intended to emancipate the remaining fifty on his behalf, but he said: I should ask first the Apostle of Allah . He, therefore, came to the Holy Prophet and said: Apostle of Allah, my father left in his will that a hundred slaves should be emancipated on his behalf and Hisham has emancipated fifty on his behalf and fifty remain. Shall I emancipate them on his behalf? The Apostle of Allah said: Had he been a Muslim and you had emancipated slaves on his behalf, or given sadaqah on his behalf, or performed the pilgrimage, that would have reached him. (Abu Daud)

Hadeeth 4

Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying: He who alleviates the suffering of a brother out of the sufferings of the world, Allah would alleviate his suffering from the sufferings of the Day of Resurrection, and he who finds relief for one who is hard pressed, Allah would make things easy for him in the Hereafter, and he who conceals (the faults) of a Muslim, Allah would conceal his faults in the world and in the Hereafter. Allah is at the back of a servant so long as the servant is at the back of his brother, and he who treads the path in search of know- ledge, Allah would make that path easy, leading to Paradise for him and those persons who assemble in the house among the houses of Allah (mosques) and recite the Book of Allah and they learn and teach the Qur'an (among themselves) there would descend upon them the tranquility and mercy would cover them and the angels would surround them and Allah makes a mention of them in the presence of those near Him, and he who is slow-paced in doing good deeds, his (high) lineage does not make him go ahead. (Muslim)

FUNERALS (HADEETH # 5 - 9)

When a Muslim dies, it is a duty on the community of Muslims to offer a special prayer for him during which they pray Allah to forgive him and admit him into heaven. The funeral prayer is Fard Kifayah for the living Muslim brothers i.e. if just one person offers it, the entire community is absolved of this duty. But see the importance attached to the more and more people joining the prayer. And the benefit reaching the deceased person is obvious.

Hadeeth 5

Syeda 'A'isha (Allah be well pleased with her) reported Allah's Apostle (peace and blessings be upon him) saying: If a company of Muslims numbering one hundred pray over a dead person, all of them interceding for him, their intercession for him will be accepted. (Muslim)

Hadeeth 6

'Abdullah b. 'Abbas (Allah be well pleased with him) reported that his son died in Qudaid or 'Usfan. He said to Kuraib to see as to how many people had gathered there for his (funeral). He (Kuraib) said: So I went out and I informed him about the people who had gathered there. He (Ibn 'Abbas) said: Do you think they are forty? He (Kuraib) said: Yes. Ibn 'Abbas then said to them: Bring him (the dead body) out for I have heard Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying: If any Muslim dies and forty men who associate nothing with Allah stand over his prayer (they offer prayer over him), Allah will accept them as intercessors for him. (Muslim)

Hadeeth 7

Narrated Syedna Uthman ibn Affan (Allah be well pleased with him): Whenever the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) became free from burying the dead, he used to stay at him (i.e. his grave) and say: “Seek forgiveness for your brother, and beg steadfastness for him, for he will be questioned now”. (Abu Daud)

Hadeeth 8

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that a dark-complexioned woman (or a youth) used to sweep the mosque. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) missed her (or him) and inquired about her (or him). The people told him that she (or he) had died. He asked why they did not inform him, and it appears as if they had treated her (or him) or her (or his) affairs as of little account. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Lead me to her (or his) grave. They led him to that place and he said prayer over her (or him) and then remarked: Verily, these graves are full of darkness for their dwellers. Verily, the Mighty and Glorious Allah illuminates them for their occupants by reason of my prayer over them. (Muslim, Bukhari, Mishkaat)

Hadeeth 9

Reported S. Jaber (Allah be well pleased with him): We came out with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to Saa'd bin Muaz when he expired. When the Holy Prophet performed his funeral prayer, and he was buried in his grave and the earth was levelled upon him, the Holy Prophet read “Tasbeeh” and we also recited “Tasbeeh” for a long time. Then he recited “Takbeer”, so we too recited “Takbeer”. It was asked “O the Messenger of Allah! Why have you recited “Tasbeeh” and “Takbeer”? He said, “The grave became too narrow for this pious man till Allah made it spacious because of it (the recitation).” (Ahmed, Mishkaat)

VISITING GRAVEYARDS. (HADEETH # 10 - 11)

Hadeeth 10

Sulaiman b. Buraida (Allah be well pleased with him) narrated on the authority of his father that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to teach them when they went out to the graveyard. One of the narrators used to say this in the narration transmitted on the authority of Abu Bakr: "Peace be upon the inhabitants of the city (i. e. graveyard)." In the hadeeth transmitted by Zuhair (the words are): "Peace be upon you, the inhabitants of the city, among the believers, and Muslims, and Allah willing we shall join you. I beg of Allah peace for us and for you." (Muslim)

Hadeeth 11

Narrated Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him): The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said while standing near the graves of the martyrs of Uhud, "I bear witness that you are alive in the sight of Allah." Then turning towards those present he said, "So visit them, and greet them – I swear by the One in whose power lies my life, they will answer back to whoever greets them until the Last Day." (Hakim, Baihaqi)

There are numerous Ahadeeth about supplications to be made when visiting the graveyard – the benefit of which to one's self and to the deceased, it quite evident.

Also note that there are several other Ahadeeth that teach us to pray, and the prayer includes all Muslim brothers & sisters (living, passed away or yet to be borne).

PERFORMING HAJJ (HADEETH # 12 - 13)

Ahadeeth in support of offering the pilgrimage on behalf of a deceased person or one who is unable to undertake the journey are numerous. Also note that performing Hajj includes Umrah, Tawaf of the Ka'ba, and also Salaat (after Tawaf) – all these are credited to the deceased.

Hadeeth 12

"A woman came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, 'I have given charity on behalf of my dead mother by giving away her female servant.' The Holy Prophet answered, 'You will have its reward [and so will she] but return the female servant so that the inheritance [may be properly divided].' The woman then said, 'She used to owe fasts, can I fast on her behalf?' He answered, 'You may fast on her behalf.' The woman then said, 'She did not perform Hajj, can I perform on her behalf?' The Holy Prophet answered, 'Yes. You may perform Hajj on her behalf.'" (Tirmizi)

Hadeeth 13

A woman from the tribe of Juhaina came to the Holy Prophet and said, "My mother had vowed to perform Hajj but she died before performing it. May I perform Hajj on my mother's behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Perform Hajj on her behalf. Had there been a debt on your mother, would you have paid it or not? So, pay Allah's debt as He has more right to be paid." (Bukhari)

GIVING OF CHARITY / SADAQAH (HADEETH # 14 - 18)

Hadeeth 14

Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him) reported that a person said to Allah's Apostle (peace and blessings be upon him): My father died and left behind property without making any will regarding it. Would he be relieved of the burden of his sin if I give sadaqah on his behalf? He (the Holy Prophet) said: Yes. (Muslim)

Hadeeth 15

Syeda A'isha (Allah be well pleased with her) reported that a man said to Allah's Apostle (peace and blessings be upon him): My mother died all of a sudden, and I think if she (could have the opportunity) to speak she would have (made a will) regarding Sadaqah'. Will I be entitled to reward if I give charity on her behalf? He (the Holy Prophet) said: "Yes". (Muslim)

Hadeeth 16

Anas b. Malik (Allah be well pleased with him) is reported as saying: Abu Talha was the one among the Ansar of Medina who possessed the largest property and among his property he valued most was his garden known as Bairaha' which was opposite the mosque, and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) often visited it and he drank of its sweet water. When this verse was revealed: "You will never attain righteousness till you give freely of what you Have" (iii. 91), Abu Talha got up and, going to Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), said: Allah says in His Book: "You will never attain righteousness till you give freely of what you love," and the dearest of my property is Bairaha' so I give it as Sadaqah to Allah from Whom I hope for reward for it and the treasure with Allah; so spend it, Messenger of Allah, on whatever purpose you deem it proper. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: Bravo! That is profit earning property. I have heard what you have said, but I think you should spend it on your nearest relatives. So Abu Talha distributed it among the nearest relatives and his cousins on his father's side. (Muslim, Bukhari). It is said that Abu Talha donated it on behalf of his mother.

Hadeeth 17

Narrated Sa'd ibn Ubadah (Allah be well pleased with him): Sa'd asked: Apostle of Allah, Umm Sa'd has died; what form of sadaqah is best? He replied: Water (is best). He dug a well and said: It is for Umm Sa'd. (Abu Daud, Mishkaat)

Hadeeth 18

Narrated Ibn `Abbas (Allah be well pleased with him): The mother of Sa'd bin 'Ubada died in his absence. He said, "O Allah's Apostle! My mother died in my absence; will it be of any benefit for her if I give Sadaqah on her behalf?" The Prophet said, "Yes." Sa'd said, "I make you a witness that I gave my garden called Al Makhrif in charity on her behalf." (Bukhari)

SETTLING OF DEBTS. (HADEETH # 19 - 20)

It is unanimously agreed by scholars that if a person dies without settling an outstanding debt, leaving no money to settle it, anyone (whether related to him or not) could pay it on his behalf, and the deceased would be absolved of the burden. The benefit from a living person to the deceased is very apparent. If the case is such and the deceased person may benefit by a financial payment, why should he not benefit by a gift made of the reward for a good action?

Hadeeth 19

Narrated Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him): The Holy Prophet said, "I am more closer to the believers than their own selves, so whoever (of them) dies while being in debt and leaves nothing for its repayment, then we are to pay his debts on his behalf and whoever (among the believers) dies leaving some property, then that property is for his heirs." (Bukhari)

Hadeeth 20

Narrated Salama bin Al-Akwa (Allah be well pleased with him) : Once, while we were sitting in the company of Holy Prophet, a dead man was brought. The Holy Prophet was requested to lead the funeral prayer for the deceased. He said, "Is he in debt?" The people replied in the negative. He said, "Has he left any wealth?" They said, "No." So, he led his funeral prayer. Another dead man was brought and the people said, "O Allah's Apostle! Lead his funeral prayer." The Holy Prophet said, "Is he in debt?" They said, "Yes." He said, "Has he left any wealth?" They said, "Three Dinars." So, he led the prayer. Then a third dead man was brought and the people said (to the Holy Prophet), Please lead his funeral prayer." He said, "Has he left any wealth?" They said, "No." He asked, "Is he in debt?" They said, ("Yes! He has

to pay) three Dinars.', He (refused to pray and) said, "Then pray for your (dead) companion." Abu Qatadah said, "O Allah's Apostle! Lead his funeral prayer, and I will pay his debt." So, he led the prayer. (Bukhari)

FASTING (HADEETH # 21 - 24)

Hadeeth 21

Ibn Abbas (Allah be well pleased with him) reports that a woman traveled in a boat and pledged that should Allah save her life, she would fast for a month. She was saved but she did not fast before she died. Her daughter or her sister asked the Holy Prophet about that and he ordered her to fast on behalf of the deceased woman. (Abu-Daud, Nasai, Ahmad and others).

Hadeeth 22

"A woman came to the Holy Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace) and said, 'I have given charity on behalf of my dead mother by giving away her female servant.' The Holy Prophet answered, 'You will have its reward [and so will she] but return the female servant so that the inheritance [may be properly divided].' The woman then said, 'She used to owe fasts, can I fast on her behalf?' He answered, 'You may fast on her behalf.' The woman then said, 'She did not perform Hajj, can I perform on her behalf?' The Holy Prophet answered, 'Yes. You may perform Hajj on her behalf.' (Tirmizi)

Hadeeth 23

Narrated `Aisha (Allah be well pleased with her): Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever died and he ought to have fasted (the missed days of Ramadan) then his guardians must fast on his behalf." (Bukhari)

Hadeeth 24

Narrated Ibn `Abbas (Allah be well pleased with him): A man came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, "O Allah's Apostle! My mother died and she ought to have fasted one month (for her missed Ramadan). Shall I fast on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied in the affirmative and said, "Allah's debts have more right to be paid." In another narration a woman is reported to have said, "My sister died..." (Bukhari)

READING OF QUR'AN AND ZIKR (HADEETH # 25 - 30)

Hadeeth 25

Narrated Abdullah Bin Umar (Allah be well pleased with him) that our beloved Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) has said, "that if anyone dies amongst you then do not keep it, send it towards the Kabr, and after burying it, Stand before its head side and recite the first Ruku of "Surah Bakarah", i.e. from Alif Laam Meem Zaalikal Kitaab to Humul Muflihoon; and recite by its feet side the last Ruku of "Surah Bakarah", i.e. From Aamanar rasoolu till the end of the Surah, Fansurna alal qumil kaafireen. (Mishkaat).

Hadeeth 26

The Holy Prophet said: "Recite Ya Seen [Qur'an 36] over your dead." (Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah)

Hadeeth 27

Ata' ibn Abi Rabah (Allah be well pleased with him) said: I heard Ibn `Umar (Allah be well pleased with him) say: I heard the Holy Prophet say: "When one of you dies do not tarry, but make haste and

take him to his grave, and let someone read at his head the opening of Surah Baqarah, and at his feet its closure when he lies in the grave." (Tabarani)

Hadeeth 28

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "What is credited to a believer of his action and good deed after his death is any useful knowledge he might have taught or spread, a Allah-fearing child he might have left behind, a copy of the Qur'an he might have left to an heir, a mosque he might have built, a house he might have dedicated for use by travelers, a stream or river he might have caused to run, a donation to charity (i.e. sadaqah) he might have set aside when he was enjoying good health. All that catches up with him after his death." (Ibn Majah).

The underlined words "a copy of the Qur'an he might have left to an heir" are an ample proof that when the heir will read from it, the reward will be passed on to the deceased.!!!

Hadeeth 29

Jaber reported: We came out with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to Saa'd bin Muaz when he expired. When the Holy Prophet performed his funeral prayer, and he was buried in his grave and the earth was levelled upon him, the Holy Prophet read "Tasbeeh" and we also recited "Tasbeeh" for a long time. Then he recited "Takbeer", so we too recited "Takbeer". It was asked "O the Messenger of Allah! Why have you recited "Tasbeeh" and "Takbeer"? He said, "The grave became too narrow for this pious man till Allah made it spacious because of it (the recitation)." (Ahmed, Mishkaat)

Hadeeth 30

Narrated on the authority of Ibn Shamasa Mahri : He said: We went to Amr b. al-As and he was about to die. He said: When I die, let neither female mourner nor fire accompany me. When you bury me, fill my grave well with earth, then stand around it for the time within which a camel is slaughtered and its meat is distributed so that I may enjoy your intimacy and (in your company) ascertain what answer I can give to the messengers (angels) of Allah. (Muslim – part of a longer Hadeeth.)

It is desirable that after burial the people sit at graveside for the duration of slaughtering a camel and distributing its meat, and that during that time the sitters busy themselves with reciting Qur'an, supplicating for the deceased, exhortation, and the stories of the Holy Prophets etc. Imam Shafie said that it is better to recite the Holy Qur'an and all those present should also recite – and it is better if the entire Qur'an is recited. Also documented by Imam Nawawi in Riyadh-us-Saleheen.

It is the opinion of most scholars that when visiting the graveyard, a person should recite the following Surahs because of their individual excellence, and then convey the reward of recitation: Surah Fateha (one of the best prayers), Surah Yaseen (the heart of the Holy Qur'an), Surah Ikhlas (equal to one third of Holy Qur'an in reward) and Surah Mulk (intercedes for the reader till the reader is forgiven).

PLANTING OF TREES (HADEETH # 31)

Hadeeth 31

Ibn Abbas (Allah be well pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) happened to pass by two graves and said: They (their occupants) are being tormented, but they are not tormented for a grievous sin. One of them carried tales and the other did not keep himself safe from being defiled by urine. He then called for a fresh twig and split it into two parts, and planted them on each grave and then said: Perhaps, their punishment way be mitigated as long as these twigs remain fresh.(Muslim)

Imam Nawawi said in commenting on the above in his Sharh Sahih Muslim (al-Mays ed. 3/4:206): "The scholars have declared desirable -- mustahabb -- the recitation of the Qur'an over the grave due to the above Hadeeth, because if relief from punishment is hoped for through the glorification of date-palm stalks, then the recitation of the Qur'an is more deserving yet, and Allah knows best." This Hadeeth also constitutes a legal basis for the planting of trees at the site of graves.

Among the Companions Hazrat Abu Barza al-Aslami (Allah be well pleased with him) and Hazrat Burayda (Allah be well pleased with him) asked to be buried together with two fresh stalks. Imam Suyuti mentioned this in "Sharh al-sudur".

PERFORMING SACRIFICE (HADEETH # 32 - 33)

Hadeeth 32

Reported S. 'A'isha (Allah be well pleased with her) : Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded that a ram with black legs, black belly and black (circles) round the eyes should be brought to him, so that he should sacrifice it. He said to 'A'isha: Give me the large knife, and then said: Sharpen it on a stone. She did that. He then took it (the knife) and then the ram; he placed it on the ground and then sacrificed it, saying: Bismillah, Allah-humma Taqabbal min Muhammadin wa Al-i-Muhammadin, wa min Ummati Muhammadin (In the name of Allah," O Allah, accept on behalf of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and the Umma of Muhammad"). (Muslim)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) slaughtered 100 sheep during his farewell Hajj and made intention for himself and all those (alive, deceased and to come) who bring faith on his Holy Prophethood. (Nasbur Raaya, Allama Zailee)

The evidence here is that the Holy Prophet sacrificed animals and donated its reward to his entire Ummah – which includes both the living and the dead – i.e. all those who existed in his time and to all those who were to come after him, until the last day.

Hadeeth 33

Hazrat Hanash (Allah be well pleased with him) said: I saw Ali (Allah be well pleased with him) sacrificing two rams; so I asked him: What is this? He replied. The Apostle of Allah enjoined upon me to sacrifice on his behalf, so that is what I am doing. (Abu Daud)

Whilst most Muslims do offer sacrifice for themselves, their relatives (alive and deceased) etc., they should also remember the above Hadeeth, and offer a sacrifice on behalf of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). May Allah grant us Tawfeeq - Aameen.

GATHERING FOR QUR'AN RECITATION & ZIKR (HADEETH # 34 - 36)

Reciting the Holy Qur'an carries great reward, is one of the best Sunnahs, and the number of Ahadeeth describing its merits are numerous. The intention here is to list only the merits of gathering to recite the Qur'an and supplicate – not to list the merits of reading the Holy Qur'an itself.

Hadeeth 34

Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying: He who alleviates the suffering of a brother out of the sufferings of the world, Allah would alleviate his suffering from the sufferings of the Day of Resurrection, and he who finds relief for one who is hard pressed, Allah would make things easy for him in the Hereafter, and he who conceals

(the faults) of a Muslim, Allah would conceal his faults in the world and in the Hereafter. Allah is at the back of a servant so long as the servant is at the back of his brother, and he who treads the path in search of knowledge, Allah would make that path easy, leading to Paradise for him and those persons who assemble in the house among the houses of Allah (mosques) and recite the Book of Allah and they learn and teach the Qur'an there would descend upon them the tranquility and mercy would cover them and the angels would surround them and Allah makes a mention of them in the presence of those near Him, and he who is slow-paced in doing good deeds, his (high) lineage does not make him go ahead. (Muslim)

It is mentioned in Tafseer Rooh-ul-Bayan that when the recitation of the Qur'an is completed, 4000 angels say Aameen on the supplication after it, and they pray for the forgiveness of the reader(s).

Imam Nawawi mentions in "Al Azkaar" that the famous Sahabi Syedna Anas (Allah be well pleased with him) used to call people to his house to attend the supplication after the completion of Holy Qur'an's recitation.

Hadeeth 35

Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him) reported Allah's Apostle (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying that Allah has mobile squads of angels, who have no other work (to attend to) but to follow the assemblies of Zikr and when they find such assemblies in which there is Zikr (of Allah) they sit in them and some of them surround the others with their wings till the space between them and the sky of the world is fully covered, and when they disperse (after the assembly of Zikr is adjourned) they go upward to the heaven and Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, asks them although He is best informed about them: Where have you come from? They say: We come from Your servants upon the earth who had been glorifying You (reciting Subhan Allah), uttering Your Greatness (saying Allah o-Akbar) and uttering Your Oneness (La ilaha ill Allah) and praising You (uttering al-Hamdu Lillah) and begging of You. He would say: What do they beg of Me? They would say: They beg of You the Your Paradise. He (Allah) would say: Have they seen My Paradise? They said: No, our Lord. He would say: (What it would be then) if they were to see My Paradise? They (the angels) said: They seek Your protection. He (Allah) would say: Against what do they seek My protection? They (the angels) would say: Our Lord, from the Hell-Fire. He (Allah) would say: Have they seen My Fire? They would say: No. He (Allah) would say: What it would be if they were to see My Fire? They would say: They beg of You forgiveness. He would say: I grant pardon to them, and confer upon them what they ask for and grant them protection against which they seek protection. They (the angels) would again say: Our Lord, there is one amongst them such and such simple servant who happened to pass by (that assembly) and sat there along with them (who had been participating in that assembly). He (Allah) would say: I also grant him pardon, for they are a people the seat-fellows of whom are in no way unfortunate –(Muslim, Bukhari, Tirmizi, and Nasa'i)

Hadeeth 36

Reported Abu Huraira (Allah be well pleased with him), that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When you pray for a dead man, make your prayer sincere for him" (Abu Daud, Ibn Majah)

So what is the Islamic view of "Qur'an Khuwane"? Did the Holy Prophet or the Sahaba do it in the manner of having say 30 people each reciting one part of the Qur'an? And what if is held on particular days such as (3rd, 10th, 40th, Annually etc)?

From the above we have proved that gathering to read the Holy Qur'an (a very meritorious act) is of course permitted, and to convey the reward (several types of meritorious acts) is commendable. When the Hadeeth says it is commendable, we need not pursue as to whether there is any "historical" evidence as to when and where it was actually done.

Observe the Hadeeth mentioned under number 2 and 28 – it specifically mentions the deceased leaving behind a copy of the Holy Qur'an. It is very clear that when the heir will read from it, the reward will be passed on to the deceased.!!!

We have also cited the practice of the Sahaba who used to gather at the house of Syedna Anas, and that should suffice as proof.

As regards having 30 or so persons reading the Holy Qur'an separately, it would not have been possible at the time of the Holy Prophet or the Sahaba immediately after him since the Holy Qur'an was not compiled, nor was it printed. The first compilation was hand written, and then only a few manuscripts were copied for preservation. The number of companions who had memorized the entire Qur'an were just a few. Also most of the early companions knew the Qur'an only in small parts, and that too not in the order we have it printed today. It would have thus been very difficult for them to coordinate reciting the entire Holy Qur'an in one sitting. The practice followed now is a matter of convenience and in no way can be termed against Sunnah.

It is also a very convenient way for the poor Muslims (who cannot afford charity, Hajj or sacrifice etc) to convey reward to their near ones, by reciting alone, or by arranging such recitation in mosques, homes etc.

We do not find any proof within Islamic Sources that forbid the holding of the Qur'an Khwanee on the 3rd, 10th or 40th day. Nor is it compulsory to do it on these very days. After all, this is a Mustahab Act, not a compulsory act (which usually has a time limit). From the prayers for the dead mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadeeth, there is no time limit. The Holy Prophets, and the Sahaba prayed for all Muslims, no matter when they had died. The Holy Qur'an also commands us likewise for our parents. However, these are scheduled for the following reasons:-

1. It is easier to remember. If not planned or programmed, it will never be held. Look, the Holy Qur'an commands us to offer prayer, but does not command us to put up notices within our mosques declaring the congregation timings, or to announce the Azaan on loud speakers – but we do that although Muslims are aware of the 5 daily prayers.
2. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to regularly visit the graves of the martyrs of Uhud regularly once every week. He also exhorted others to visit Uhud, and greet the martyrs. (See Hadeeth above). It is also mentioned that he offered charity on their behalf. The actions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) (i.e. visiting every week) are a very good example for us.
3. The 3rd day probably signifies the end of the permitted mourning period (except for widows). It is also the last day for people to pay condolences. So the last thing to do before the mourning ends would be, of course, to pray for the departed soul.
4. The 10th day means that a week has passed by after the mourning period. It is therefore chosen as a grim reminder.
5. The number 40 occurs in the Qur'an and Hadeeth in many places. It is an important number to indicate change from one state to another. According to some Hadeeth, the fetus in the womb of a mother changes from one state to another every forty days. Holy Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) was asked by Allah to spend forty nights at mount Sinai (al-Baqarah 2:51). Bani Israil were kept wandering in the wilderness of Sinai for forty years (al-Ma'idah 5:26). Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was bestowed with revelation from the Holy Qur'an at the age of forty. If 40 Muslims attend a funeral and pray for the deceased's salvation, their intercession will be accepted by Allah. And there are many other important events in history associated with the number 40. The 40th day also means that a month has passed by since the last grim reminder.
6. The annual day speaks for itself. Another year has passed – even for the person who is alive.

Please note a person may be saddened by the loss of someone near for his entire life – there is nothing forbidden in it – but he may not “mourn” the loss after 3 days (except in case of widows).

We must also remember that:-

1. These are occasions of solemnity, and not ostentation or show.
2. The purpose should be seeking Allah's pleasure, of conveying reward to the departed soul, and praying for their salvation.
3. These occasions should serve as reminders of our own deaths and the after life.
4. Giving charity to the needy & deserving, along with such recitations, on behalf of the deceased is commendable.
5. The conveyance of reward not only benefits the deceased but also has immense reward for the doers of the good, and they remind them of the hereafter. The person performing the good deed gets the reward multiplied by the number of people to whom the reward was conveyed!

May Allah keep us on the Straight Path – Aameen. Peace and abundant blessings be upon the Holy Prophet, his family, his companions and his entire Ummah. Aameen.

M. Aqib Farid Qadri
21 Safar 1424 (23 April 2003)
email : aqibfarid@yahoo.com