

The Prophets Alaihim as Salam are Alive

The Ahl as-Sunnah wal Jama'ah holds an obstinate belief that the Prophets Alaihim as-Salam are Alive and life of the Prophets in their graves is firmly established through authentic and explicit proofs. The great Hadith Master, Imam Bayhaqi compiled them in a separate book. Imam Jalal Al-Suyuti, Master of Hadith, also authored a book on this topic. May Allah Most High have mercy on them both. Master of Hadith Ibn Hajar says:

"Al-Bayhaqi compiled a brilliant book regarding the life of prophets in their graves in which he mentions the hadith of Anas, 'The prophets are alive in their graves praying', which he transmits from the channel of Yahya Ibn Abu Katheer, who is a rigorously authenticated transmitter, on the authority of Al-Mustalim Ibn Sa'eed, whom Ahmad and Ibn Hibban deem reliable, on the authority of Al-Hajjaj Al-Aswad (a.k.a. Ibn Abu Ziyad Al-Basri), whom Ahmad and Ibn Ma'een deem reliable, on the authority of Thabit, on the authority of him."

Abu Ya'la also transmits it in his Musnad from this avenue. Al-Bazzar transmits it, but it appears with him on the authority of Hajjaj Al-Sawwaf, which is an error. Al-Hajjaj Al-Aswad is the correct name, as is explicitly mentioned in the narration of Al-Bayhaqi, which he rigorously authenticates.

Witness from Qur'an al-Kareem

ALLAH SubHanuhu wa Ta'ala says in the Holy Qur'an:

ولا تحسبن الذين قتلوا في سبيل الله أمواتا بل أحياء عند ربهم يرزقون

And do not ever assume that those who are slain in Allah's cause, are dead; in fact they are alive with their Lord, receiving sustenance. [Surah Aal-e-Imran 3:169]

Qadi Thanauallah Pani Patti writes under this verse:

"One group of scholars believes that this life is specific to martyrs. I believe that it is not specific to them, rather, the life of the Prophets is superior to theirs and the effects of this are more apparent such as marriage being prohibited for the wives of the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam after his demise whereas the widow of a martyr can remarry. The Siddiqin hold a higher rank than martyrs and the Salihin, meaning the Awliya, are adjoined to them as is the order in the verse, Of the Prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the righteous. This is why the gnostics says that our souls are our bodies and our bodies are our souls. It is mass transmitted from many Awliya that they help their friends and damage their enemies. Allah guides whom He wills." [Tafsir Mazhari, Vol. 1, Page 151]

Qadi Thanauallah has proven the life of Prophets, Siddiqin and Awliya after their demise and also that they help and assist by the will of Allah.

Qadi Shawkani writes:

There is a verse of the Qur'an that martyrs are alive, are given sustenance and that their life is physical. What will be the state of Prophets and Messengers? The hadith proves that Prophets are alive in their graves and has been narrated by Imam Munziri and graded Sahih by Imam Bayhaqi. [Nayl al-Awtar, Vol. 3, Page 282]

Imam Jalal al-Din Suyuti writes:

The Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam is alive in his blessed grave. This is proven from either the generality of the verse or the meaning that is derived from it. [al-Hawi lil Fatawa, Vol. 2, Page 149]

Ahadith on the Life of the Prophets

1. Hadrat Abu al-Darda' Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu reported that the Messenger of Allah SallAllahu Alaihi wa Sallam said,

إن الله حرم على الأرض أن تأكل أجساد الأنبياء فنبي الله حي يرزق

“Indeed Allah has made it Haram (forbidden) upon the earth to eat the bodies of the Prophets. Thus, the Prophets of Allah are alive and are given their sustenance.”

Sunan Ibn Maja, Vol. 5, Page 207, Hadith 1706

Mishkat al-Masabih, Vol. 1, Page 304, Hadith 1366

Hadrat Sheikh 'Abd al-Haq “Muhaddith-e-Dehwli” states under the commentary of this Hadith:

"The Prophets of Allah are alive in their graves, just as they were alive in this world." [Ashi'ah al-Lam'at – Vol. 1 Page 576]

Imam Mulla 'Ali al-Qari states under the commentary of this Hadith:

"There is no difference between the life of the Prophets after their demise and the life of them in this world. This is why it has been stated that the Awliyah (pious friends of Allah, the Most Exalted) do not die, but in fact, move from one place (the world) to another (the Hereafter). " [Mirqat – Vol. 2 Page 212]

2. Hadrat Aws ibn Aws Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu narrated that the Messenger of Allah SallAllaho Alaihi wa Sallam said,

إن الله حرم على الأرض أجساد الأنبياء

“Allah has made the (eating of the) bodies of the Prophets Haram (unlawful) on the earth.

Sunan Abi Dawood, Vol. 3, Page 404, Hadith 1049

Sunan Nisa'ee, Vol. 5, Page 238, Hadith 1385

Sunan Ibn Maja, Vol. 3, Page 447, Hadith 1138

Mishkat al-Masabih, Vol. 1, Page 304, Hadith 1361

A sound (sahih) tradition related on the authority of Aws ibn Aws al-Thaqafi by Ahmad in his Musnad, Ibn Abi Shaybah in the Musannaf, Abu Dawud in the Sunan, Nisa'i in his Sunan, Ibn Majah in his Sunan, Darimi in his Musnad, Ibn Khuzaymah in his Sahih, ibn Hibban in his Sahih, Hakim in the

Mustadrak, Tabarani in his Kabir, Bayhaqi in Hayat al-anbiya', Suyuti in Anba' al-adkhiya, Dhahabi who confirmed Hakim's grading, and Nawawi in the Adhkar.

Hadrat Mulla 'Ali al-Qari states under the commentary of this Hadith:

"Indeed the Prophets are alive in their graves." [Mirqat – Vol. 2 Pg. 209]

Hadrat Sheikh 'Abd al-Haq "Muhaddith-e-Dehlwi" states under the commentary of this Hadith:

"The Prophets are alive and everyone believes that they are alive; there is no disagreement in this. Their life (in their graves) is the real, physical life (which they possessed in this world); not like the martyrs whose life is only spiritual." [Ashi'ah al-Lam'at – Vol. 1 Page 574]

3. Hadrat Anas Ibn Malik narrated that the Messenger of Allah said,

الأنبياء أحياء في قبورهم يصلون

"The Prophets are alive in their graves, praying to their Lord".

A sound (sahih) tradition related on the authority of Anas ibn Malik Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anho by: al-Bazzar in his Musnad, Abu Ya`la in his Musnad (7:445), Ibn `Adi in al-Kamil fi al-du`afa', Tammam al-Razi in al-Fawa'id, al-Bayhaqi in Hayat al-anbiya' fi quburihim, Abu Nu`aym in Akhbar Asbahan, Ibn `Asakir in Târeekh Dimashq, al-Haythami in Majma` al-zawa'id (8:144), al-Suyuti in Anbâ' al-adhkiya' bi-hayat al-anbiya', and al-Albani, in Silsilat al-ahadith al-sahihah.

Imam Jalal al-Din Suyuti comments:

"The life of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and give him peace, in his grave, and that of the rest of the prophets is known to us as definitive knowledge (`ilman qat`iyyan)."

4. Hadrat Anas Ibn Malik narrated that the Messenger of Allah said,

ليلة أسري بي مررت على موسى وهو يصلي في قبره

"The night I was enraptured to my Lord I saw Mûsa standing in prayer in his grave".

A sound (sahih) tradition related on the authority of Anas and others by Muslim (4:1845), Nasa'i (3:216), and Bayhaqi in the dala'il al-nubuwwa (2:247) and the Hayât. Some mention the beginning (in parentheses), while others omit it.

5. Hadrat Abu Harayra narrated that the Messenger of Allah said,

ما من أحد يسلم على إلا رد الله على روعي حتى أرد عليه السلام

"No-one greets me except Allah has returned my soul to me so that I can return his salâm".

From Abu Hurayra, in Abu Dawud (6:214) with a sound (Sahih) chain. This hadith has been adduced by the scholars as the legal proof for the validity and modality of visiting and greeting the Prophet Peace and Blessings be Upon Him.

Imam Jala al-Din Suyuti said that

"radda" means "ʿala al-dawâm," i.e. permanently, and not temporarily. In other words, Allah does not return the rûH and take it back, then return it again and then take it back again, but He returned it to the Prophet permanently, and the Prophet is alive permanently.

Sakhawi, Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalâni's student, said:

"As for us (Muslims) we believe and we confirm that he is alive and provided for in his Grave" [al Qawl al Badee` Page 161]

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

"It is obligatory knowledge to know that his body is in the earth tender and humid (i.e. as in life), and when the Companions asked him: 'How is our greeting presented to you after you have turned to dust' he replied: 'Allah has defended the earth from consuming the flesh of Prophets,' and if his body was not in his grave he would not have given this answer." [al-RûH Page 58]

Ibn Hajar al-Haythami wrote in al-Jawhar al-Munazzam:

"The proofs and the transmitted texts have been established as authentic in the highest degree that the Prophet is alive and tender... that he fasts and performs pilgrimage every year, and that he purifies himself with water which rains on him."

6. Hadrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood narrated that the Messenger of Allah said,

حياتي خير لكم تحدثون ويحدث لكم فإذا أنا مت كانت وفاتي خيرًا لكم تعرض على أعمالكم فإذا رأيت خيرًا حمدت الله وإن رأيت شرًا استغفرت لكم

"My life is a great good for you, you will relate about me and it will be related to you, and my death is a great good for you, your actions will be presented to me (in my grave) and if I see goodness I will praise Allah, and if see other than that I will ask forgiveness of him (for you)."

Qadi `Iyad cites it in "al-Shifa" (1:56 of the Amman edition) and Suyuti said in his "Manahil al-Safa fi Takhrij Ahadith al-Shifa" [Page 31 - Beirut 1988/1408]. Ibn Abi Usama cites it in his Musnad from the hadith of Bakr ibn `Abd Allah al-Mazni, and al-Bazzar from the hadith of Ibn Mas`ud with a sound (sahih) chain.

7. It is cited in Subki's Shifa' al-Siqâm fi ziyarat Khayr al-Anâm , where he mentions that Bakr ibn Abd Allah al-Mazini reported it, and Ibn al-Jawzi mentions it through Bakr and then again through Anas ibn Malik in the penultimate chapter of the penultimate section of al-Wafa, both huffaz without giving the isnad. However, Ibn al-Jawzi specifies in the introduction of al-Wafa that he only included sound traditions in his book. He also mentions the version through Aws ibn Aws:

"The actions of human beings are shown to me every Thursday on the night of (i.e. preceding) Friday." [See also FatH al-Bâri 10:415, al-Mundhiri's Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb 3:343, and Ahmad 4:484]

Sayings of the Exalted Scholars

Sayings of the scholars regarding the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam being alive are so numerous that they cannot be estimated. Only a few are mentioned here.

1. Imam ibn al-Haj writes:

Our scholars say that those who visit the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam should believe that he is alive and they are present before him because there is no difference between his life and demise

in that he sees the nation and knows their states, intentions and thoughts. All of this is apparent to him and none of it is hidden. [al-Madkhal, Vol. 1, Page 282]

2. Imam 'Ali Qari commentates on the hadith, When a believer sends salutations upon me:

It means that the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam is occupied in seeing the light of Allah. Allah turns the attention of the Prophet's soul so that he may reply to the salam of people. Otherwise, the relied upon creed is that the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam is alive in his blessed grave like the other Prophets are alive in their graves in the presence of their Lord. Their souls are connected to the upper realm like they were in this world. Their hearts are associated with the upper realm and their bodies are in this world. [Sharh Shifa', Vol. 3, Page 499]

3. Imam Sayyid Mahmood Alusi writes:

Imam Tabrani has narrated the whole hadith that whichever Prophet passes away, they spend forty days in their grave until their soul is returned to them. I passed by the grave of Musa 'Alaihis Salam on the night of Mi'raj and he was standing in his grave offering salah. This hadith does not mean that they do not stay in their graves and go elsewhere, rather, it means that unlike other dead people, Prophets do not remain dead for more than forty days and their souls are returned to them and they are alive. What does this meaning have to do with the claim that they come out of their graves after forty days? Being alive in the grave does not necessitate coming out of it. I am a believer in the life of the Prophets. [Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani, Vol. 22, Page 36]

4. Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi writes:

One miracle of Abu Bakr Siddiq Radi Allahu 'Anhu is that when his body was brought to the blessed grave of the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam, it was said: Peace be upon you. This is Abu Bakr present at your door. Suddenly, the door opened and a voice came from the blessed grave saying: Bring the beloved to the beloved. [al-Tafsir al-Kabir, Vol. 21, Page 86]

5. Shaykh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith al-Dihlawi writes:

The last companion to come out of the grave of the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam was Qasham Radi Allahu 'Anhu who said: I saw the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam in his grave and his lips were moving. I moved closer to hear and heard him saying: Oh Allah, forgive my nation. [Madarij al-Nubuwwah, Vol. 2, Page 442]

6. Shaykh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith al-Dihlawi writes:

There is agreement on the Prophets being alive and no one disagrees that this life is physical, worldly and real. It is not like the life of martyrs which is spiritual and figurative. [Ashi'at al-Lum'at, Vol 1, Page 574]

7. It has been stated in Nasim al-Riyadh sharh al-Shifa Qadi 'Iyadh:

The prophets are alive in their graves living the 'real' life which they had in this world. [Nasim al-Riyadh sharh al-Shifa Qadi 'Iyadh, Vol. 1 Page 196]

8. In al-Mirqat sharh Mishkat, Imam Mulla 'Ali al-Qari states:

Undoubtedly, the Messenger of Allah is alive; presented with sustenance; and one can ask from him any kind of assistance whatsoever. [al-Mirqat sharh Mishkat – Vol. 1 Page 284]

9. Hadrat Sheikh 'Abd al-Haq Muhaddith-e-Dehlwi states in his book Suluk Aqrab al-Subuli bi al-Tawajjuh ila Sayyid al-Rusuli:

Despite the increasing disagreement and disputes amongst the scholars of this Ummah, there is no disagreement in this fact that the Messenger of Allah is alive in his grave; he is present there. There is not even a slightest thought of saying that this life is not real (but majaz - metaphoric). The Holy Prophet is Hadhir-o-Nadhir (present and witnessing) seeing the actions of his Ummah and being presented with them. Those who seek assistance from the Messenger of Allah, and those who draw close to him, he blesses them and is their mentor. The Holy Qur'an states: 'surely you are to die, and they too are to die.' [Surah:39 – al-Zumar, Verse:30]. This means moving away from this world (to

the Hereafter). The meaning of the word hayat (life) is the real physical life after death. [Suluk Aqrab al-Subuli bi al-Tawajjuh ila Sayyid al-Rusuli, Published by Rahimiyah – Deoband – India Pg. 161]

10. Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi writes:

I have felt that it is unique to the Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam that he can make his soul take the form of his body. This is what he indicated towards when he said Prophets do not encounter real death; they offer prayers in their graves, perform pilgrimage and are alive. [Fuyudh al-Haramayn, Page 84]

11. The Muhaddith of Makkah, Sayyid Muhammad 'Alawi al-Maliki writes:

We have mentioned that the life of Barzakh is real and it proven from established texts that the dead – whether Muslim or not – hears, feels and knows. Life, sustenance and entering paradise is not specific to martyrs. This is the true creed which is followed by the Imams of Islam and the majority of Ahlu's Sunnah. This is why it is not necessary to prove the life of the Prophets because it is more apparent than the Sun and not needy of verification. Moreover, the correct path is to speak of how their lives are superior and perfected. Like the ranks of people in this world differ, so too is the living of the Prophets superior. [Mafahim Yajibu 'an Tusahhaha, Page 165]

12. After quoting several hadiths that prove the life of Prophets 'Alaihimus Salam, he writes:

The mentioned hadiths and others prove definitively [Qat'i] that the meaning of Prophets passing away is that they are veiled from us and we cannot sense them even though they are present and alive. Such as angels are alive and present but we cannot see them. [Mafahim Yajibu 'an Tusahhaha, Page 171]

Verification from the Opposition

1. al-Muhannad is a short monograph that has signatures of attestation from 24 Deobandi Molvis including Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi and Mahmud Hasan. In it, Khalil Ahmad Anbethwi writes:

According to us and our elders, the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam is alive in his blessed grave and his life is like that of this world but worship is not obligatory upon him. This life is specific to the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam and all other Prophets and martyrs and is not of Barzakh which all believers and even non believers share. [al-Muhannad, Page 13]

2. The said founder of Darul 'Uloom Deoband, Qasim Nanotwi, writes:

The life of the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam cannot diminish and the life of believers can. This is why at the time of demise, the life of the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam will not finish, yes, it

will be veiled and the life of believers will totally finish or half of it or a third will. Hence, this veiling of the life of the Prophet SallAllahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam can be compared to the Sun, which, at the time of solar eclipse, is veiled and its light is obscured but not defunct. [Aab-e-Hayat, Page 208 / 209]

Important Notes:

1. The Prophets are alive in their graves living their 'real' and physical life which they used to live in this world. This is why on the Night of Ascension when the Messenger of Allah reached Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), he led the prayer in which all the Prophets stood behind him. If the prophets were not alive after their death, then how would have they come to perform salaah in Bayt al-Maqdis behind the Final Messenger?!

2. The life of the Prophets in their graves is the real, physical life which they used to live in this world. It is not merely a 'spiritual' life like that of the martyrs. This is why the wealth left in inheritance by the Prophets is not distributed; nor can their wives marry anyone else after them. Contrary to this, the wealth left in inheritance by the martyrs can be distributed and their wives can marry anyone after their death.

3. The life of the Prophets in their graves is not barzakhi (interspatial life) but it is the 'real', 'physical' life they used to spend in this world. The only matter of the fact is that we are not able to see them. This has been stated by the great Imam al-Shiekh Hasan ibn 'Ammar Shurunbulali in the commentary of his famous book "Noor al-Idah" entitled "Maraqiy al-Falah":

It is well known fact among the great scholars that the Messenger of Allah is alive in his blessed grave (the life which he used to spend in this world). The Messenger of Allah is given sustenance; takes benefit from everything which he desires; and gains the pleasure and joy of worshiping (as he had in this world). However, those who have not reached close proximity to Allah are unable to see him. [Noor al-Idah entitled Maraqiy al-Falah, Page 447]

Conclusion:

Some detractors propagandise that Ahlu's Sunnah wa'l Jama'ah do not believe that Prophets encounter death at all. This is blatant slander and nothing to do with reality. Whoever totally denies that Prophets 'Alaihim Assalam pass away and their souls are taken out; such a person is a denier of Qur'anic verses and mass transmitted hadiths and therefore out of the fold of Islam.

The Prophets also have to face death ; But it is simply just a nominal death

After that moment they start living once more ; Just as they had lived a physical life before