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Islamic Education - Death - Lesson (1-2) - Introduction: The Prohibition of Wishing for Death.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All- Knower, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Praise be to Allah Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings upon Sayyidina Muhammad, the honest and the trustworthy. O Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us, You are the All- Knower, the Wise. O Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. O Allah show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them. O Allah our Lord make us amongst those who listen to the Word and follow the best meaning of it, and admit us, by Your Grace, to the ranks of Your righteous servants.

A good rule to follow in delivering Islamic lectures:

Dear brothers, I once read a health rule: eat your food when you have the desire to eat and stop eating it when you still have that desire.

The listeners and readers will be more interested in the Islamic lectures if every scholar follows this rule while delivering Islamic lectures. I mean it is a great job to discuss the subject which people are eager to know about, but do not make it too long lest they get bored of it. As usual, Insha-Allah, I will pick up a subject to discuss, then when I feel that my dear brothers in faith comprehend it, and that if I

discuss it more they will become weary of it, I defer discussing it until several months, so that we feel it is time to talk about it again.

Who is the quite rational person?

One of my brothers in faith drew my attention to the fact that the subject of death was not discussed in details in the lectures I delivered in this Masjid. I thanked him for this important comment, and I took that into consideration.

Therefore, I am discussing the subject of death in our lecture today. I would like you dear brothers not to think that choosing this subject means that we are pessimist. . Let me tell you that stupid people boast about their past, less stupid people live the moment, while the wise, the intelligent, and the genius live (plan for) their future. Whoever plans for the future is a wise person, while whoever lives in his past is keeping himself at the back, and whoever lives his moment is so-so.

In fact, the developed countries, to use a modern term, always plan for many years in the future, while other countries face the events. Unlike those two kinds of countries, the developing countries keep boasting about their past, which is completely pointless. When you encounter the current events while your enemies make the first step, you may succeed in your reaction and you may not. You should realize that the real success is to plan for the future.

What is the most momentous future event?

Every individual has his own private life, but when it comes to the question of the future all of us are concerned. Dear brothers, what is the most momentous future event? It is the end of your life, but what is next? What is your final destination? Man may travel, may go for a picnic and may go on a mission trip. He may travel abroad for one month or for one year or two, then he will come back home. However, there is a journey from which no one will come back. What is this journey? What will happen during such a journey? What kind of provisions you should make for it?

I believe that discussing the subject of death is not intended to make you pessimist, gloomy or melancholic, rather it is intended to remind you that death is an inevitable fate. It is the end of all creatures. Death puts an end to all of us whether we like it or not. No one is an exception; not even a Noble Prophet, a great king, a wealthy man or a skilled doctor. Death is the fate of every living creature. As a poet said:

Every creature will die and only The Glorified and the Mighty remains (Allah)

No matter how long night might be, dawn surely will break

No matter how long one might live, descending the grave is a must for him

**Every human being, no matter how long he lives,
will be carried one day in a coffin to be buried.**

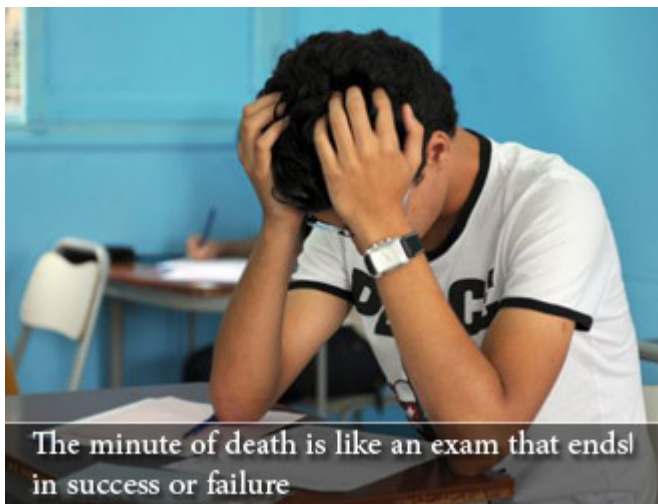
**If at a funeral you carry a coffin to the grave, keep in mind
that one day you will be carried in a coffin too.**

Make a thoughtful pause here:

The son of one of our righteous brothers in faith told me last month what his father did before he died. He said that his father bought his grave one year before his death, and that he used to go to that grave and lie in it every Thursday. One Thursday, the father went down that grave, but this time he brought some sand and spread it on himself, then he said: "This is more comfortable." two weeks later he died and was buried in his grave.

I would like to tell you about another man who is one of our great Islamic scholars, and whom I deeply honor. That scholar bought a grave five years ago, and his name was written on the gravestone. He used to visit it every Thursday, and when he died he was buried in that grave with his good deeds. . His name was written Grave is the container of your deeds.

This is the happiest moment of the believer's life:



Ignorant people think that pondering over the subject of death means that you are pessimist and melancholic. No one can escape death, because we are all mortal whether we like it or not. Death comes to people unexpectedly, for it has no rule. A man may die in his twenties, thirties, forties or fifties. The only rule about

death is that it has no rule whatsoever. When you get yourself well-prepared for something to happen, you will not be surprised once it happens. This is just the case of a hardworking student who studies hard for his exam. Such a student keeps thinking about the exam, so he will not be worried about the exam questions when it is June. He will do very well in the exam, because he revises the course several times and he keeps it by heart. The three hours of the exam will be the happiest for him, because he will reap the fruits of studying hard.

Dear brothers, I am not exaggerating when I tell you that the happiest moment in the believer's life is the one when he is on his deathbed. The believer knows that he will reap the fruits of all his deeds that he does during his lifetime; performing acts of worship, performing prayers, supplicating to Allah, keeping firm in Allah's Path, controlling His limbs, refusing the ill-gotten money, raising his children, calling to Allah and enduring hardships for the Sake of Allah. After death, all hardships come to an end, and it is time to be honored. In other words, the moment of death means that the time for performing righteous deeds, carrying out hard work and exerting hard effort comes to an end and it is time for veneration,

rewarding and honoring. This is exactly what the following Noble Ayah means. Allah the Almighty says:

"They shall have all that they will desire"

[Az-Zumar, 34]

The believer shouldn't have a melancholic view look to death, rather he should welcome death the way the companions of the Prophet PBUH used to. Listen to the famous words uttered by the Muslim leaders whenever they fight against the infidels, "Our soldiers love death more than you love life." Unlike the believer, the heedless who disobeys Allah and who turns away from Him, will be frightened when he thinks about death. Death for him is just like a nightmare.

The death agony of some patients:

Once I asked a cardiac specialist to describe to me how some patients act in the moments of death agony. He said that some patients feel fear and terror and others hit their forehead and scream aloud. He told me that they woe unto him, and some of them suffer extreme agony which makes them forget all worldly pleasures and say that they have never seen anything good in their life, while the believer feels that death is a fairly happy event.

Matters which are related to the subject of death:

Actually, the subject of death is a very wide one, so I think that it is better to tackle some of its numerous sequential topics from time to time Insha' Allah. As a start, we will tackle its relation with the worldly life. The first topic revolves around the Hadith in which the Prophet, may Allah have peace and blessings upon him prevented us from wishing for death. The second topic is related to the following Noble Hadith:

"The best of you are those with the longest lives and best in action"

This is a very reasonable topic. As I said, the subject of death includes many topics, and we will, Insha-Allah, deal with some of them in the coming weeks.

Is there any rule for death?

I want to mention a story which I told you many times previously, because I think that it is significant to our subject. A relative of mine was a bright teacher, and he used to live a disciplined life. That person had a sense of humor, so one evening he was sitting with his friends and chatting to them. As he was kidding them, he said that he would have a long live.

When they asked why he was so sure, he gave them logical reasons. He said, "I do not eat much, gain weight or smoke. I walk a lot and I take things easy." These are scientific facts; the mental stress, the excess weight, shocks and smoking are

some of the causes of death. That friendly chat was on Saturday evening in one of Damascus districts, but the next Saturday that man died. You see how death has no rule at all.

That is what he could reach of knowledge:

One of my brothers in faith told me what happened to his uncle's wife when he was born in one of the poorest districts in Damascus. He said that he lived with his family in one room of the house, and his uncle's family lived in the other. The rooms were separated from each other by an old wall. His uncle's wife was afflicted by an incurable illness, and the doctor told her family that she was about to die. He said that they should write her death notice and get prepared for her death. However, her health improved slightly and then Allah the Almighty healed her. That noble brother said, "When that doctor said that they should write her death notice, I was born on the same day in the next room. I grew up, entered the school of that district and finished my studies there. When I was an adult, I worked in my father's shop. After a period of time we bought another house in one of the richest districts in Damascus and my uncle's wife, who was supposed to die forty-five years ago, visited me in my new house." That was the first time I have ever heard of a patient who lived forty-five years after the doctor assured her that she would die.

A real story:

A friend of mine was afflicted by a sever disease, and one day the doctor told his family that he had to be discharged from the hospital. The doctor said that he was dying, so it was better form him to go home. His brothers wrote his death notice. I knew that he was dying, so I expected to see his death notice posted on the wall the very next day. However, when I went to the Masjid to deliver an Islamic lecture after Al-Fajr prayer, I did not see his death notice. I asked his family about him, and I was told that his health improved. The noble brother recovered and he lived for seven years after that event, while his brother who wrote the death notice died before him. This story as well as many other stories proves the fact that death has no rules.

Death is a future event, which we have no idea about its exact date. Thus, health has no relation to death. Man may be in a good health, yet he dies suddenly. On the other hand, someone who is paralyzed may live for thirty years staying in bed. The closest people to this man will not bear him, and they may wish for his death. Someone used to invoke Allah saying: "O Allah, whoever wants to do serious harm to me, afflict him with paralysis in his hands and blindness in his eyes. O Allah afflict him with blood cancer, so that he wishes for death but his wish will never be done."

Sometimes death is great mercy of Allah the Almighty.

Death is great mercy for this woman:

One of my brothers in faith told me that his family should keep his mother's hands and legs confined to her bed. I asked him about the reason, and he replied that if they set her free, she would eat her excrement and would take off all her clothes. He said that his mother has been confined to bed for twelve years.

Verily, death is great mercy for this woman. Allah the Almighty says:

"And Allah has created you and then He will cause you to die, and of you there are some who are sent back to senility, so that they know nothing after having known (much). Truly! Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful."

[An-Nahl, 70]

A famous and touching story:

I would like to mention a story that I had told you about in one of my previous lectures. I had a free hour at the high school where I used to teach, so I entered the office of the director. We had a friendly talk and he was complaining about many things. He offered me a cup of tea and said, "I've decided to travel to Algeria] teachers were assigned to travel to other Arab countries to teach there,[and I would like to stay there for five years. I'll spend five summer vacations abroad. I'll spend the first vacation in France, the second one in Italy, the third one in Britain and the fourth one in Spain. During these vacations I'll visit all museums of each country and the countryside. I would like to do sightseeing, to know about the civilization of each country and to mix with people there. I would like to know how people live in those foreign countries. Then, I'll return to Syria after five years and I'll buy a shop for oriental masterpieces. These goods do not spoil, and they have no specific price. As years pass, I'll make this shop an intellectual forum for my friends, and I'll let my children take care of it." He said many things about his future plans, which I do not remember. He was planning for many things to do in the next twenty years.

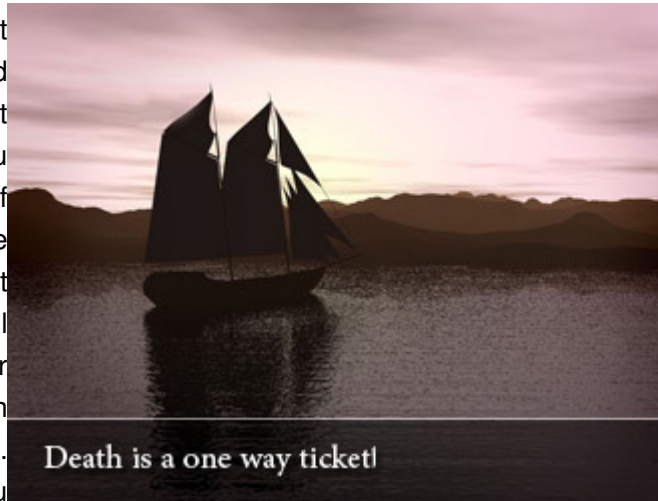
When we finished our talk, it was time to go to my class. I came back home in the afternoon and stayed there till the evening. I went out to my job, but when I came back home at night I read his death notice posted on the walls near my house. I met him that day at eleven o'clock in the morning, and I saw his death notice at seven o'clock in the evening. Death comes unexpectedly and the grave is the container of deeds.

This guest comes suddenly and it will be determined to keep its position. It never changes its attitude no matter how you desperately plead to give you one more year. You may need to stay alive until you finish your work, sell your houses, pour a concrete ceiling or clear your goods from customs. Death does not care about all these things. Hence, the moment of death is a very crucial one. The evidence is mentioned in the Noble Ayah; Allah the Almighty says:

"Who has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving; "

This is the critical point about death:

The death problem is that whenever it is mentioned beside large amounts, it makes them few; i.e. if you have the largest amount of money, you will lose it in one second when your heart stops beating. Also you will lose your movable or immovable properties which will be others' possessions. All the precious presents you



have received during your lifetime will not be yours anymore at the moment of death. Even your own vehicle which you do not allow anyone to drive will become someone else's. You cannot take any of your properties as the shroud has no pockets. The only thing that will be left for you is a few meters of white calico. Whoever is accustomed to wearing a suit which costs eighty thousand liras, will be wrapped in a twenty-lira- calico after his death. This point is crucial since death is a journey from which you will never come back.

Death is the fate of every human being:

Many people travel to oil-producing Arab countries to work there. They can come back to their homelands for a certain period of time to visit their families. However, they will not be able to get back to the country where they work if it is written "Departure of no return" in their passports. When this phrase is written in someone's passport, he will be shocked. Figuratively, this phrase will be written in the passports of all of us at the moment of death. We will all leave this life and will never come back. When someone dies no one will ask when he comes back. Have you ever heard of someone who died in the afternoon then his family asked why he didn't come back home at night? His family know that he will never come back home, rather they will give all his personal objects to the poor so that nothing will remind them of him.



Death is a serious subject. A young man may say that he is still in the prime of his life and he will not die soon. However, being young will not stop death from putting an end to your life. Death will

come to everyone; to the young, the old, the sick, the strong and the weak. It was said: "Glory to Allah Who has subdued His servants by death." All of us are concerned with the subject of death. When you listen to an interesting lecture about Zakah, you may say that this does not concern you because you have no money. Even if the subject of the lecture is precise and is proved by evidences, it does not matter you because you are poor. As for the subject of Hajj, it is not enjoined on the poor. Most subjects are related to particular people except death. No one can say it does not concern him, because death is the inevitable fate of every human being.

I went to America few months ago and I saw a graveyard there which attracted my attention. Whenever you go, death comes to you. Allah the Almighty says:

"Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you"

[An-Nisa,78]

Whatever your conditions are, death will overtake you; no matter how wealthy you are you will be buried in the cemetery.

The prevention from wishing for death is reported in some Ahadeeth:

The first topic I have tackled is the prohibition of wishing for death. It shows how a believer should be disciplined by Allah's Orders.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet PBUH said:

((None of you should long for death because of a calamity that had befallen him, and if he cannot, but long for death, then he should say, 'O Allah! Let me live as long as life is better for me, and take my life if death is better for me.))

Sometimes death increases human's evil deeds, so man should not say: O Allah, take my life. Staying alive may increase your righteous deeds. Muslim reported in his Saheeh that Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, said: The Prophet PBUH said:

((None amongst you should make a request for death, and do not call for it before it comes, for when any one of you dies, he ceases (to do good) deeds and the life of a believer is not prolonged but for goodness.))

The more the believer lives, the more his righteous deeds increase. Thus, he should never wish for death. Some people may invoke Allah saying: O Allah, take my life. This Duaa is against the teachings of Islam, and you shouldn't say Amen after it.

Al-Bukhaari and An-Nsassai, may Allah be pleased with them, reported from Abu Huraira that the Prophet PBUH said:

((None of you should wish for death. If he is righteous, perhaps he may add to his good works, and if he is a sinner, possibly he may repent in case he is given a longer life.))

As long as man still has time, there is a chance to repent.

Seize the opportunity:

The following Ayah has a very precise meaning; Allah the Almighty says:



"For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Wheresoever you may be, Allah will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allah is Able to do all things."

[Al-Baqarah, 148]

You have the free choice, so the direction you have chosen is of your own free will. Life is short, and your choices are the very cause of your happiness. For example, if you enter a jewelry store, and the shop owner tells you that you can choose the piece of jewelry you want, you will find that an excellent opportunity to choose a diamond which costs one hundred and fifty million dollars. He gives you a very great opportunity to take the most precious piece of jewelry in his shop, does not he? Allah the Almighty says:

"For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Wheresoever you may be, Allah will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allah is Able to do all things."

[Al-Baqarah, 148]

You life is but few days, and you are given the freedom of choice, so the best thing you do is to hasten towards all that is good.

Ponder deeply over the paraphrasing of this poem:

Allah the Almighty says:

"For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Wheresoever you may be, Allah will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allah is Able to do all things."

[Al-Baqarah, 148]

Death may come wherever you are and whatever your position is:

Do not feel secure against death while you can see and you can breathe. and even if you are fortified with gatekeepers and guards, the arrows of death pierce those who try to be fully protected from them. I do not find you cautious of it; you are just like the woodcutter who cuts woods in complete darkness. You hope for safety, but you do not follow its causes. Remember the ship doesn't sail on land

A humorous fictional story:

Consider the following humorous fictional story: In the era of Prophet Sulaiman PBUH, a man was attending his meeting, and then the Angel of Death arrived and stared at him steadily. That man asked Prophet Sulaiman PBUH: "Who is that man who is staring at me?" Prophet Sulaiman PBUH told him that he is the Angle of Death. That man was frightened to death, and he asked Prophet Sulaiman PBUH to send him to the other part of the world. Prophet Sulaiman PBUH had a flying carpet, as Allah the Almighty had subjected the wind to him. He PBUH took that man to India which is the farthest place. Two days later, that man died in India. Thus, when Prophet Sulaiman PBUH met the Angle of Death, he asked him: "Why were you staring at that man?" He answered: "Because Allah the Almighty had ordered me to take his soul in India, so I was surprised when I found him sitting with you here."

Allah the Almighty says:

"For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Wheresoever you may be, Allah will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allah is Able to do all things."

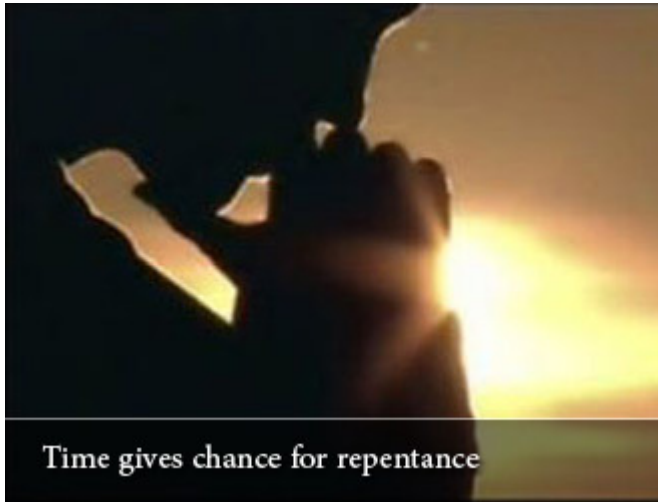
[Al-Baqarah, 148]

It means in any place and position.

Make a thoughtful pause here:

The space shuttle 'Challenger' turned into fireball seventy seconds after its launch. That shuttle transgressed the gravity and traveled at the fastest speed achieved by man, but after few seconds of its launch, it turned into pieces.

The topic of these two Noble Ahadeeth:



The first topic which is related to the subject of death is the prohibition of wishing for death. Listen to the following Hadith: Jabir Ibn Abdullah narrated that the Prophet PBUH said:

((None of you should hope for death, as it is a great disaster, while it is a sense of happiness to have a

long life and to repent to Allah the Almighty.))

[Al- Bazaar and Ahmad]

Time gives you a chance to repent. Also, Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

"Had Allah's Messenger PBUH not stated this.." None should make a request for death," I would have definitely done that."

Sometimes, man may be addicted to Alcohol, but he repents, or he may be a delinquent man, but he repents. Time is good for this man; had he died before the time of repentance, he would have been in the Hell-fire.

The situation of Amr Ibn Al-Aas on his deathbed:

I mentioned few weeks ago that when our master Amr Ibn Al-Aas was on his deathbed, he cried a lot. His son asked him about the reason saying, "O father, why are you crying since the Prophet PBUH had given you glad tidings of Paradise." He said to him: "I have got into three situations: before I embraced Islam the Prophet PBUH was the person I hated the most to the extent that I hoped to kill him. If I had died in that situation, I would have been one of the people of the Hell-fire. After a period of time, I embraced Islam and I believed in the Prophet PBUH and he was the most beloved person to me, so if I had died in that

situation, I would have been one of the people of Paradise." Then he mentioned the third situation in which he had some doubts. Someone may deserve to be thrown into the Hell-fire, but if he repents to Allah with sincere repentance Allah the Almighty will accept his repentance.

The gate of repentance is always open:

One of my brothers in faith told me that he had committed all sins which may come to my mind except murder, nevertheless he repented to Allah. Afterwards, he became a righteous man, and he adhered firmly to the Orders of Allah the Almighty. During years of calling to Allah, I heard a lot about people who had committed all major sins, but they repented to Allah the Almighty later on. Almighty Allah says:

"Say: "O 'Ibadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

[Az-Zumar, 53]

Conclusion:

Al-Marzawi reported from Al-Qasem that, our Master Saad Ibn Abi Waqas, may Allah be pleased with him, once wished for death, but when the Prophet PBUH heard him he said:

((Do not wish for death. If you are one of the people of Paradise, then living longer is better for you, but if you are one of the people of Hell, then do not have to hasten to it.))

Man is either a believer or a disbeliever. If he is a believer then the more he lives, the more his righteous deeds increase, but if he is a disbeliever, he will never escape Hell-fire. Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet PBUH said:

((None of you should wish for death, as he does not know what he has sent forth for himself.))

The Prophet entered upon some of his companions while his uncle Al-Abbas was suffering an agonizing pain: Um al-Fadl narrated that the Prophet PBUH entered upon his uncle Al-Abbas while he was suffering a severe pain, he heard him wishing for death, so the Prophet PBUH said:

((O Abbas! O Uncle of Allah's Messenger! Do not wish for death. If you are a good man and live long, your good deeds will multiply and that is better for you. If you are not a good man and your death is delayed, then you are given

**an opportunity to make up what you have missed and that is better for you.
Thus, do not wish for death.))**

These were some Noble Ahadeeth of the Prophet PBUH that prevent us from wishing for death. We have tackled in our lecture today the prohibition of wishing for death as the first topic concerning the subject of death. There are many other topics, and I will tackle some of which, Insha-Allah, in the following weeks.

Translation : Rana Saraqbi

Edited by : Kawthar al-Hajj Saleh