



## Synopsis of Friday Sermon

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REPENTANCE  
REVITALIZATION OF FAITH  
RENEWAL OF COVENANT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

### Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on Dec 10, 2021

#### Are You Ready for the Inevitable?

Just as we swiftly come into this world, suddenly, the inevitable reality, death comes upon us. If anything is certain in life, it is death. Death is an undeniable truth that no one can deny nor escape from. Every second of everyday a person dies somewhere in the world. It is inevitable and unavoidable. We will be returning to our Owner and Creator.

Death is a subject people often avoid to talk about, much less remember it. The Qur'an, in many places confirms, *"Every soul will taste death."* This repetition is to remind the believers of this reality allowing them to reflect on their lives and the life to come. Conscious believers who are firm on their belief in the hereafter will take heed of these reminders and prepare themselves for that moment of truth.

Every soul shall go through this phase and there is no way out. *"Say (O Prophet), 'the death you are running away from will come to meet you and you will be returned to the One who knows the unseen as well as the seen and He will then inform you of what you used to do.'"* (al-Jumu'ah, 62:8) More emphasis is made in the following ayah, *"Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you are inside lofty towers."* (al-Nisa', 4:78)

"The Angel of Death" or *"Malak al-Mawt."* is ever ready to claim our souls, *"Say (O Prophet), 'The Angel of Death put in charge of you will reclaim you, and then you will be brought back to your Lord.'"* (al-Sajdah, 32:11)

Some die suddenly while others undergo pain and suffering. According to prophetic traditions, sickness is a source of mercy and a chance for forgiveness. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) once said, *"For every misfortune, illness, anxiety, grief or hurt that afflicts a believer – even the hurt caused by the pricking of a thorn – God wipes off his sins and his sins fall away from him as leaves fall from a tree."* This is God's gift to the believer.

Unfortunately, many people are heedless of death. The attraction of this world keeps them busy making money, competing for fame and seeking earthly pleasures. This tragedy leaves the soul hopeless and helpless.

This weakness was profoundly expressed by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in a hadith when he warned the Muslims of a time when Allah (SWT) would cast *"wahn"* in their hearts. When he was asked about the *"wahn,"* the Prophet replied, *"Love of the present world (dunya) and hatred of death."* Unfortunately, most people are deceived by the present life as Allah (SWT) recounts, *"But you prefer the life of this world. While the hereafter is better and everlasting."* (al-'Ala, 87:16,17)

What is life? Philosophers and thinkers have always been grappling with this question. Rather than discussing their speculative thoughts, it is best to know what Allah (SWT) Himself says about life. *"Know (O people) that the life of this world is (nothing but) play and amusement, an adornment and boasting among you, and*

*an increase in wealth and children... ” (al-Hadid, 57:20). This is generally, the reality of man’s perception about this worldly life, whether that person is a Muslim, a follower of another faith tradition, an agnostic, or even an atheist. This life according to Allah, “Is like plants that grow after rain; (their growth) delights the tillers, but then you see them wither away, turn yellow and become stubble... ”*

Indeed, Allah spoke the truth. We are born into this world as babies wanting to only play and have fun; compete with our peers in our teenage years; reach the prime of youth, get a degree, obtain a career or establish a business and spend the rest of our lives making money and children until we become old, frail, sick and eventually die. What has one done for the next life, the real eternal abode, one might ask? The ayah continues, *“There is terrible punishment in the next life as well as forgiveness and pleasure from God...”* Allah concludes the ayah by explaining that, *“The life of this world is only an illusory pleasure.”* (al-Hadid, 57:20).

Allah (SWT) gives people chance after chance. *“If God were to take people to task for the evil they do, He would not leave one living creature on earth, but He defers them to an appointed time: when their time comes they cannot delay it for a moment nor can they advance it.”* (al-Nahl, 16:61). The term of one’s life span is predetermined by Allah (SWT) before birth. Only He (SWT) knows when and where each person will expire.

Although, death is certain and inevitable, yet people tend to live as if they are going to live forever. Reality is, death will catch up with everyone and it knows no age. Often times it comes suddenly. Many die in the prime of their youth. It happens that sometimes the father has to bury his son. I had to burry my son who died at the young age of 33.

The mystery of life and death is not without purpose. The life of this world is a test from God. Humans are tested on the basis of the heavenly covenant Allah (SWT) took from them in the world of spirits. *“Blessed is He in Whose hand is the dominion (of the universe), and He has power over all things. The One who created Death and Life that He may test you (to see) which of you is best in deeds: and He is the Almighty, the Forgiving.”* (al-Mulk, 67:1,2)

People are constantly put to all types of tests. *“Every soul is certain to taste death. We test you all through the bad and the good (things of life) by way of a trial, and to Us you will all return.”* (al-Anbiya’, 21:35) Believers are urged to be patient while facing trials and tribulations. *“O you who believe! Seek help through patience and prayer, for God is with the patient.”* (al-Baqarah, 2:153)

Believers throughout their entire lives anticipate hardships and difficulties. They are aware of Allah’s promise, *“We shall certainly test you with fear, hunger, loss of property, lives, and crops. But, give good news to those who are patient. Those who, when inflicted with a calamity say, ‘We belong to God and to Him we will return.’ Those are the people who will have blessings and mercy from their Lord; they are the ones who are guided.”* (al-Baqarah: 156,157) Believers do not complain but resign themselves to God’s will. They remain patient in the face of adversity knowing that they belong to God and to Him they will return. Believers are not afraid of death.

What is the reality of death? The word ‘taste’ in the ayah, “Every soul shall taste death” is similar to its usage when used with food. Good and wholesome food will taste good and sweet while bad, sour and bitter food will always taste bad and bitter. Similarly, a good and righteous soul will taste the sweetness of death while a wicked and rebellious soul will taste the bitterness of death.

When death occurs, the spirit (*ruh*) leaves the body. We learn through prophetic traditions that a good soul comes out of the body with ease, while an evil soul, which resists leaving the body is taken out harshly by the angel of death. The two types of souls are accordingly honored and dishonored in their respective journeys to the heavenly dimensions and back to the grave when they are questioned. The souls will return to the grave for the final exam. A good soul will have no problem answering simple questions such as who is your Lord? Who is your Prophet? And, what is your Book? As simple as they may sound, a wicked soul that lived in rebellion against Allah (SWT) will have a terrible time in the grave and will not be able to answer the posed questions. May Allah (SWT) bestow His Mercy upon all of us, ameen.

We must recognize that people take nothing with them to their graves. We learn through a prophetic

saying, “When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things, perpetual charity (*Sadaqah Jariyah*); knowledge which is beneficial; or a righteous descendant who prays for him (the deceased).”

Such admonitions remind us that we should hasten in performing good deeds lest our time expire and our book of deeds be closed forever. The Prophet (SAW) in a hadith said, “An intelligent wise person is one who controls his desires (*nafs*) and works for that which come after death.”

The following admonition speaks volumes, “*O you who believe! Be mindful of God, and let every soul look to what it sends for tomorrow (Day of Judgment) and fear God, for God is well aware of everything you do.*” (al-Hasr, 59:18)

Indeed, “*Every soul shall taste death and you will be paid in full (but) only on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever is kept away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise will have triumphed. The present world is only an illusory pleasure.*” (Aal Imran, 3:185)

Death is an inescapable reality that everyone must acknowledge. What are we to do about it? How are we going to prepare for it? We should be ready for what is to come after death i.e. the afterlife, resurrection, and Judgment Day.

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) in his first public speech stressed, “By Allah! You will die just as you sleep, and you will be resurrected just as you wake up from sleep. You will be recompensed on account of what you do, earning good for good and evil for evil. Verily, it is either Paradise for eternity or the Fire for eternity.”

May Allah (SWT) make our good deeds heavy on the Day of Judgment and bestow His Grace and Mercy on all of us, ameen.