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Fatwa no. 4283

Q 1: Regarding the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), is he (peace be upon him) alive in his grave, in the worldly sense, with the return of his soul to his body, or is he alive in the sense of the life of Al-Barzakh (period between death and the Resurrection) with no legal liabilities or obligations? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, during his final illness, "O Allah! With the highest companions (i.e. The prophets in the highest part of Paradise)." Is his body as it was when it was placed in the grave, without a soul, and his soul is in the highest part of `Illiyun (a register inscribed, to which the angels bear witness) and it will join his body on the Day of Resurrection? Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿And when the souls are joined with their bodies, (the good with the good and the bad with the bad). [1] ﴾

A: Our Prophet (peace be upon him) is living in his grave the life of Al-Barzakh, so he is enjoying the blessings that Allah has prepared for him as a reward for the wonderful deeds he performed in this world. But his soul has not joined his body to be alive in the grave as it was in this world, because life in the grave is not like the life of this world, or the life in the Hereafter; it is the life of Al-Barzakh, which comes between life in this world and life in the Hereafter. We therefore know that he died, as other prophets and other people before him died. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿And We granted not to any human being immortality before you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): then if you die, would they live forever? [2] ﴾ He also says: ﴿Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish. [3] ﴾ ﴿And the Face of your Lord full of Majesty and Honour will remain forever. [4] ﴾

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Furthermore, Allah says: ﴿Verily you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) will die, and verily they (too) will die. [5] ﴾ There are other Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) also that show that Allah took his life. We know too, that the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them all) washed his body, shrouded him, offered the Funeral Prayer for him, and buried him. If he had been alive in the worldly sense, they would not have done for him what is done for other people who die. Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her) asked for her inheritance from her father (peace be upon him), because she was convinced that he had died, and none of the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them all) disputed with her on that. Instead, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) responded to her request by saying that nothing could be inherited from the prophets. ﴿The Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) also unanimously agreed to choose a caliph for the Muslims to succeed the Prophet (peace be upon him). That is why Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was appointed as the caliph. If the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been alive in a worldly sense, they would not have done that. This shows that there was Ijma` (consensus) among them that he (peace be upon him) had died. When the Fitnah (trials) and problems increased during the caliphates of `Uthman and `Aly (may Allah be pleased with them), and also before and after that, they did not go to his grave to consult him or to ask him for a way out of the Fitnahs and problems, or a way to solve them. If he (peace be upon him) had been alive in a worldly sense, they would not have neglected to consult him when they were in such dire need of someone to rescue them from the trials that surrounded them. With regard to the soul of the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is in the highest part of `Illiyun, because he is the best of creation, and because Allah has given him Al-Wasilah, which is the most superior position in Paradise.

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[1] Surah Al-Takwir, 81: 7

[2] Surah Al-Anbiya', 21: 34

[3] Surah Al-Rahman, 55: 26

[4] Surah Al-Rahman, 55: 27

[5] Surah Al-Zumar, 39: 30

