



554188 - Is the Angel of Death one angel, and how can he take the soul of someone in whose house there is a dog?

the question

How can the Angel of Death take more than one soul in more than one place at the same time? I heard some answers which say that the Angel of Death can take more than one soul without going to the people, because he is an angel, but what I know is that the one who dies sees the Angel of Death and the two angels before he dies, but how can that happen when hundreds of people are dying at the same second? And how can he take the soul of a person in whose house there is a dog, as there is a story about Jibril (peace be upon him) refusing to enter the House of the Messenger because there was a dog under the bed?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

The Angel of Death is the one whom Allah has appointed to take the souls out of the bodies, as He, may He be Exalted, says: {Say: The Angel of Death who has been entrusted with you will take your souls. Then to your Lord you will be returned} [As-Sajdah 32:11].

The Angel of Death has helpers among the angels who help him in that, as Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take his soul, and they do not fail [in their duties]} [Al-An`am 6:61].

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said regarding the first verse: What appears to be the case, based on this verse, is that the Angel of Death is a specific individual among the angels, as is readily understood from the hadith of al-Bara' that is quoted above in [our commentary on] Surat Ibrahim. In some reports, his name is given as Azra'il, as is well known and was stated by Qatadah



and others, and he has helpers.

Similarly, it is narrated in the hadith that his helpers collect the soul and pull it out from the body until, when it reaches the throat, the Angel of Death takes it.

End quote from his *Tafsir*, 1/360.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin said in *Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 5/245: The Angel of Death has helpers who help him to take out the soul from the body until they bring it to the throat, and when they bring it to the throat, the Angel of Death seizes it. End quote.

This is what is narrated from the early generations, as Qatadah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on the verse {Say: The Angel of Death who has been entrusted with you will take your souls} [As-Sajdah 32:11]: The Angel of Death takes your souls, and with him there are helpers from among the angels. At-Tabari narrated it from him in his *Tafsir*, 18/604.

Sammak al-Hanafi asked `Abdullah ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) about two individuals who happened to die suddenly at the exact same moment, one in the east and one in the west: how is the Angel of Death able to deal with them both?

Ibn `Abbas replied:

By the One is Whose hand is my soul, the ability of the Angel of Death to take the souls of people in the east and in the west, and people in darkness and light and on the sea, is no less than the ability of a man to reach out and take food from a table in front of him: he takes whatever he wants. Narrated by Abush-Shaykh in *Al-'Azamah*, 432.

It was narrated that Mujahid (may Allah have mercy on him) said, commenting on the verse {Say: The Angel of Death who has been entrusted with you will take your souls} [As-Sajdah 32:11]: The entire earth is brought together for him and is made like the size of a plate from which he can pick up whatever he wants. Narrated by at-Tabari in his *Tafsir*, 18/604.

II.



As for seeing the Angel of Death, Imam Ahmad narrated in his *Musnad* (18534) the hadith: “When the believer is about to depart this world and move to the hereafter, there come down to him from heaven angels with white faces, as if their faces were the sun, bringing with them shrouds from paradise and perfume from paradise, until they sit around him as far as the eye can see. Then the Angel of Death (peace be upon him) comes and sits by his head, and says: O pure soul, come out to forgiveness from Allah and [His] pleasure...” And when mentioning the disbelievers, he said: “... the Angel of Death comes and sits by his head, and says: O evil soul, come out to wrath from Allah and His anger.” Its isnad was classed as authentic (sahih) by the commentators on *Al-Musnad*. This hadith mentions seeing the Angel of Death when the soul departs.

For more information and to read the hadith in full, please see the answer to question no. [10403](#).

III.

We know that the nature of the angels and their creation, and what Allah has enabled them to do of deeds, cannot be compared to those of humans. Similarly, we know that death is the first stage of the hereafter, and Allah has made the hereafter and everything that is connected to it part of the unseen which is beyond the comprehension of living people. So we should be content with what the Lord of the Worlds has told us and what His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) has told us, so that we will have proper belief in the unseen, like other believers.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Allah, may He be Glorified, has ordained that the hereafter, and everything connected to it, should be unseen and beyond the comprehension of accountable people in this world, by His Perfect wisdom, and so that those who believe in the unseen will be distinct from others. The first matter of the unseen is that the angels come down to the dying person and sit near him, and he sees them with his own eyes and they speak in his presence...

Ar-Ruh, 1/187.

IV.



Muslim (2104) narrated from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: Jibril (peace be upon him) promised to come to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) at a certain hour, and that time came but he did not come. He had a stick in his hand which he threw down and said: "Allah does not break His promise, and neither do His Messengers." Then he turned and saw a puppy beneath a bed. He said: "O `A'ishah, when did this dog get in here?" She said: By Allah, I do not know. He ordered that it be taken out, then Jibril (peace be upon him) came. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "You made an appointment with me and I waited for you, but you did not come." He said: I was prevented by the dog that was in your house. We do not enter a house in which there is a dog or an image.

In other authentic (sahih) hadiths, it says that the angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog, an image or a statue.

The scholars have explained that this refusal is not something common to all angels, for some of the angels enter all houses and do not refuse because of a dog or image; rather they must enter the houses to do what Allah has commanded them to do.

As for the angels who refuse to enter such houses, they are the angels of mercy who go around the houses; they are the angels who bring mercy and blessings, and pray for forgiveness for the believers, and this is a type of punishment for the owner of the house who goes against the prohibition on keeping dogs, images and the like.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, explaining why the angels do not enter [such houses]:

The reason for them refusing to enter a house in which there is a dog is because dogs eat a lot of impure things; and because some of them are called devils, as it says in the hadith, and the angels are the opposite of devils; and because dogs have an unpleasant smell, and the angels hate unpleasant smells; and because it is not allowed to keep dogs. Hence those who keep dogs are punished by being deprived of the angels entering their house, praying in it, asking Allah to forgive them, bringing blessing to them and their houses, and warding off the harm of the Shaytan.



As for those angels who do not enter a house in which there is a dog or an image, they are angels who go around bringing mercy and blessing, and praying for forgiveness. As for the recording angels, they enter all houses, and they do not leave the sons of Adam under any circumstances, because they are enjoined to count and record their deeds.

End quote from *Sharh Muslim*, 14/84.

Something similar may be said regarding the Angel of Death and his helpers, because they are instructed to seize souls from bodies. For more information, please see the answers to questions no. [137174](#) and [139953](#).

However, we are not required to know the details of how the angels are and how they do what Allah has instructed them to do; no deeds are dependent on knowing these things, and they have no impact on the certainty that all people will die, or the certainty that the angels write down people's deeds and record them, and that the Angel of Death and the [angelic] messengers of Allah take people's souls, Then Allah will resurrect them, gather them and bring them to account for their deeds.

And Allah knows best.