

Differences between the World and the Hereafter and Their Superiorities

What Are the Most Important Differences between the World and the Hereafter?

What do you think about the differences between the world and the hereafter? Is there any difference? If there is, how much do we know these differences? And how much influence does this knowledge have on our lifestyle, decisions, relationships, behaviors, and thoughts?

As we stated in our discussion on the similarities between the world and the hereafter, we need to have a relative understanding of the hereafter in order to have a comfortable life and a healthy birth so that we can adapt ourselves to the living conditions there. We mentioned that we use the Law of Proportion to know the hereafter. After knowing the similarities, we will deal with the differences between the world and the hereafter. Now that we are going to be transferred to a much more advanced realm, it is very important to be aware of the differences.

Difference in Constructive Power

The world's resources are very insignificant compared to those of the hereafter. The hereafter is billions of times more advanced and beautiful than this world. But in terms of constructive power, the hereafter can never be compared to the world. The world, with all its limitations, has a great power for growth and development. The hereafter does not have such a power. This constructive power also exists in

the relationship between the mother's womb and the world.

You might have heard that doctors prefer to treat fetal diseases or defects before the fetus is born because of the constructive power of the mother's womb. When a baby is born with diseases or defects, he has to endure the pain of treatment to the end of his life because the world cannot even make a single finger.

Despite its limitations, the world has a more constructive capability than the hereafter. One of the most striking differences between the world and the hereafter is the womb-like power of the world. One hour in the world is equivalent to thousands of years in the hereafter. It is because of this power that the limited lifetime in the world can build an endless and infinite eternity. Sometimes a good or bad deed that we do in a few seconds and think it is not very important or influential moves us forward or backward thousands of years in the system of the hereafter. This is truly amazing! The world is the farm of the hereafter,¹ and we will reap in the hereafter whatever we sow in this world.

Vastness of the Hereafter Is Incomparable to that of the World

One of the other differences between the world and the hereafter lies in their vastness and grandeur. In comparing the mother's womb and the world, the world is infinitely greater than the womb, and the fetus cannot even imagine such vastness and resources while in the womb. The same relationship exists between the world and the hereafter. The hereafter is also infinitely greater and more

¹. Muhammad Reyshahri, *The scale of Wisdom*, vol. 2, p. 890.

advanced than the world, and understanding the grandeur of the hereafter and its indescribable blessings is very difficult for us who live in this small and limited world.

Differences in Blessings and Punishments

One of the other differences between the world and the hereafter lies in blessings and punishments. The blessings of the hereafter are incomparable to those of the world. In heaven, there are resources that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human mind has conceived.² Even imagining the blessings of the hereafter is impossible for our worldly mind that has become accustomed to the limitations of the material world. It is like talking to a fetus, whose only conception of food is blood, about all kinds of fruits, desserts, colorful foods, and elegant restaurants! The fetus cannot feel how delicious these foods are or imagine how they look like. The most delicious food for the fetus is the blood of the umbilical cord because he has not seen or tasted anything better.

Our worldly mind is just like a fetus in the womb. We have no understanding of the blessings of heaven because we have not seen them. Therefore, when God uses terms like palaces, *houris*,³ jewels, trees, streams, etc., to describe these blessings, it is because He wants to make these blessings closer to our earthly and limited

². Prophet Muhammad: "I have prepared for My righteous servants that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has ever imagined. This is what I have made known to you; read it if you wish. No soul knows what delight has been kept hidden for them." (Mohammad-Baqer Majlesi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 8, p. 92)

³. The *houris* are beings in Islamic religion, described in English translations as "and splendid companions of equal age [or well-matched]", "lovely eyed", of "modest gaze" and virgins who will accompany the faithful in the heaven (<https://www.al-islam.org/ur/tags/houris>)

minds and understandable to us. Otherwise, the blessings of heaven are in no way comparable to their worldly equivalents, to the point where it is said "In heaven, there is nothing from the world, except names."⁴ The world is no more than a plaything, or in other words, an entertainment or amusement in comparison to the hereafter.⁵ But the realm of the hereafter is the great kingdom.⁶ There are different levels of heaven for believers. The distance between the highest and lowest levels of heaven is like the distance between heaven and earth.

The punishments of the hereafter are also incomparable to those of the world. In the world, we eventually get used to problems and it becomes easier for us to bear them. But in the hereafter, the pain and punishments become anew every moment. In fact, the hereafter is designed in such a way that neither the inhabitants of hell become accustomed to the punishment, nor do the inhabitants of heaven grow bored or tired of the blessings of heaven.

The Truth Revealed, the Veils Removed

Every particle in the heavens and earth and every being from inanimate objects to plants and animals hold a level of awareness and consciousness. Based on this understanding of their creation, they constantly remember and praise God. However, as long as we are in this world, it is hard and unimaginable for us to fully

⁴. Prophet Muhammad: "Nothing in heaven resembles anything in the life of this world except in name." (Ali ibn Abd-al-Malik al-Hindim, *Treasures of the Doers of Good Deeds*, vol. 14, p. 454)

⁵. Quran, 48:36

⁶. Quran, 76:20

grasp this reality. The veils of the world obscure our vision and prevent us from seeing the inward truths of existence. It is much like the darkness of the womb which does not let the fetus see the truths of the world. This, too, shows one of the other differences between the world and the hereafter.

Upon entering the hereafter, these earthly veils are taken off and the hidden inward truth of all things is revealed. Even our organs, which seem to be lifeless, start speaking and testify to our good and bad deeds. Of course, some people are able to see the hidden inward truth of the realm of existence. Those who spend their whole life worshipping and obeying God and purify their souls can see some truths which cannot be seen by others. Yet, it is only in the hereafter that we can fully understand the hidden inward truth of the whole existence.

In the previous lesson, we tried to express the most important similarities and here the most important differences between the world and the hereafter based on the Law of Proportion, so that with a relative understanding, we can become more familiar with the realm after death and prepare ourselves for an eternal life there. What other similarities and differences do you know about? How does knowing the characteristics of the hereafter affect our lifestyle?

Please share your thoughts with us.