

How Disbelief or Belief in the Hereafter Impacts Our Lifestyle

The Effects and Benefits of Belief in the Hereafter on Lifestyle Improvement

How often do you think about death during the day?

How many times a year do you visit cemeteries?

What is your perception of life after death?

What place does belief in the hereafter hold in your life?

Are you prepared enough for an eternal and everlasting journey?

If we ask different people what the most important period of human life is, we receive various answers. Some consider the first seven years important, some consider youth, and others consider middle age and maturity as the most crucial periods of life. Among these, few mention life after death because, unfortunately, most of us do not consider this period as part of our lives.

Our life stages form a continuous chain starting from pre-worldly realms, continuing in this world, and after this world in the realm of the hereafter. Since we are eternal beings, the most fundamental and longest stage of our life constitutes the hereafter; perhaps even the word "longest" may not be adequate to describe the hereafter because no matter how long a path is, it eventually reaches an end. However, our life in the world after death has no end.

The hereafter is not a matter of belief, but an authentic world that envelops and surrounds us right now; therefore, disbelief or belief in the hereafter does not change its reality. All of us will enter that world in a short while. If we have not

created the necessary preparations for living there within ourselves, we are doomed to punishment according to our unreadiness.

What Kind of Place Is the Hereafter?

Whenever the discussion turns to Heaven and its blessings, some compare the beauty and attractions of this world and sarcastically say, “Whatever is in Heaven exists on earth as well, so we are not crazy to abandon worldly pleasures in pursuit of a better hereafter!” This perspective is very superficial and stems from a lack of understanding of the hereafter. Due to our incomplete knowledge of existence, we think that after death, we enter a realm very similar to this world, where we can have a similar lifestyle. Such a perception about the hereafter and Heaven is an illusion; in Heaven, nothing from this world exists; only the names of phenomena resemble earthly names.

For example, there are dwellings in Heaven, but heavenly homes are incomparable to worldly ones; the residents of Heaven eat, but the food of this world and heavenly food cannot be compared. Everything is billions of times more advanced, beautiful, and diverse in Heaven than the world. The term “billions of times” is not stated out of convention or exaggeration, but it is a true comparison between the world and the hereafter; it is just like the relationship between the mother's womb and the world.

The womb is narrow, dark, and limited, and the fetus lacks an understanding of the nature, the sky, the sea, light, and other beauties and blessings of the world. The world is the *Malakut* and the unseen world of the fetus, and until the fetus is born, he cannot see or comprehend the greatness of the world. Consequently, if he were

capable of speech, he would deny the existence of the world and claim that because he cannot see the world, it does not exist! However, the belief or disbelief of the fetus in the world does not call into question the reality of the world's existence. Whether the fetus has faith in the existence of the world or not, and whether he has prepared himself for life in the world or not, he will be born regardless. If he has not brought with him the necessary tools (limbs) for living in this world, that will be just the beginning of his troubles. Our birth into the hereafter is exactly the same.

The world of the hereafter is the *Malakut* and the unseen realm of the world, and as long as we are veiled by this worldly life, the hereafter remains invisible to us. However, as soon as we leave this world, the veils will be lifted, and many truths of that realm will become apparent. Therefore, when God uses terms like light, tree, fruit, wine, *houris*, palace, jewels, clothing, and other names to describe the blessings of Heaven, He aims to make them relatable and understandable to our earthly and limited minds. Otherwise, as we have mentioned, nothing in Heaven or Hell resembles what we know in this world. All the blessings and punishments we observe here are merely a downgraded version of the original template created in accordance with this lower form of existence. God holds the ultimate treasure of all things. Some may argue that believing in something we cannot see is difficult; however, the key point is that understanding the unseen realm is not hard when we consider its signs. The issue is that we have become accustomed to perceiving only tangible things and are unable to see the *Malakut* of objects. Thus, the first step on this path is to properly adjust our perspective.

The Impact of Belief in the Hereafter on Lifestyle Improvement

Naturally, belief in the hereafter and life beyond death is somewhat shocking and brings responsibility. Someone who holds such a belief can no longer live as he wishes because he knows that every decision, relationship, behavior, and thought will impact the quality of his life in the world after death. For this reason, some individuals try to overcome their fears about this by denying or forgetting about life after death. With this mindset, they limit their vision and dedicate all their efforts to building a world that is fundamentally destined for destruction, expecting something transient to provide lasting enjoyment! Suppose you have closely interacted with such individuals. In that case, you will quickly realize that despite their apparent successes, they are internally disturbed and restless because they are attached to things that can disappear at any moment. These individuals are like someone who builds a luxurious palace on an earthquake fault, or according to Rumi, he has built his house on a land that does not belong to him.¹

Contrary to the modern worldview, which invites people to forget about death and enjoy the present moment, the Islamic worldview expands individuals' horizons infinitely, eliminating all their worries and anxieties. For this reason, believers are always happy and calm, and this inner peace and happiness are the direct results of belief in the hereafter and thinking about death.

Belief in the hereafter and continuous and permanent focus on life after death leave remarkable and extraordinary effects on individuals' lives. These effects cannot be

¹. Do not make your home among the people of the earth;
Focus on your own work, do not meddle in others' affairs.
Who is the stranger? It is your earthly body;
For the sake of it, you bear your sorrow.
(*Masnavi*, Book 2)

achieved through any other means except through this path. However, this belief must be more than intellectual and verbal assent; it requires heartfelt conviction to yield its benefits.

Belief in the hereafter regulates all our decisions, relationships, behaviors, and thoughts according to our eternal and everlasting life, which is its most important effect. In future lessons, we will further discuss the impacts and benefits of contemplating death and belief in the hereafter.