

How Does the Heart's Harmony with the *Barzakh* Affect Our Fate in the Hereafter?

Does the Quality of a Person's Life in the *Barzakh* Depend on Their Heart's Harmony with the *Barzakh*?

Before entering any new environment, people naturally think about how to adapt to its conditions. When we plan to travel to a new country, we usually ask about the local currency, laws, culture, weather, and facilities. If we arrive with the wrong money, clothes, or plans, instead of feeling calm and enjoying the experience, we may end up confused, anxious, and uncomfortable. The same principle applies to simpler situations too. For example, showing up to a formal event in inappropriate clothing can lead to embarrassment and a sense of not belonging. So environmental compatibility is an all-embracing principle, following which is essential for peace of mind and success.

This principle does not only apply to travel, social events, or daily tasks. The most important kind of harmony we should think about is our preparation for the world we enter after death — a place called the *Barzakh*. According to Islamic traditions, the *Barzakh* is a realm between this world and the Day of Judgment, and it is millions of times larger and more complex than our earthly life. In the *Barzakh*, we cannot create new tools to fulfill our needs. We can only live with what we have already prepared in this world. The Quran clearly states this principle: "That each person will only have what they endeavored towards" [1].

Just as a fetus must develop its organs while still in the womb to survive in the outside world, we must prepare ourselves in this world for the life that awaits us in the *Barzakh*. If we fail to do so, we may face deprivation and suffering in that realm.

Among all the things we need to prepare, the most important is the soundness of our heart. In Islamic teachings, the heart is the center of faith, intentions, and character. Whether our heart is sound or not plays a major role in our heart's harmony with the *Barzakh*. The Quran says: "The Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit, only those who come before God with a sound heart" [2]. According to this verse, a sound heart naturally aligns with Heaven, while a sick heart is more in tune with Hell. Therefore, each person's fate in *Barzakh* depends on their heart's harmony with the *Barzakh*.

The Fate of a Sound Heart in the *Barzakh*

Barzakh operates with precise justice. In that realm, there is no formal questioning or investigation. Instead, the true essence of each person becomes fully visible. Just like a healthy newborn reveals its well-being through its natural appearance and reactions, a person entering the *Barzakh* shows their health through their spiritual form, that is having a sound heart and soul.

A heart that has been freed from corrupt beliefs and moral sicknesses in this world and has been shaped by faith and good character is known as a sound heart. This heart is in harmony with the laws of the *Barzakh*. The moment it enters that realm, it finds its place—just like a key that perfectly fits a specific lock—by naturally moving toward Heaven. There is a narration in which Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) said:

"There is a piece of flesh in the body which, if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupted, the whole body becomes corrupted. That piece is the heart" [3]. A sound heart is the key to well-being at all levels of existence.

So if someone carries a sound heart from this world into the next, they are capable of enjoying the blessings of the *Barzakh*. But if they have not acquired a sound heart—the tool necessary for life in the hereafter—even if they are placed in Heaven, they cannot truly enjoy it. To understand this better, consider the example of a fetus. If a fetus has not developed eyes while in the womb, after birth it cannot benefit from the beauty of the world, no matter how breathtaking the surroundings may be. Similarly, a baby born without a mouth cannot drink water, no matter how fresh and pure the water may be.

In the same way, a person who did not develop a sound heart during their lifetime will not have the capacity to perceive or enjoy Heaven, even if they enter it. That inability becomes a source of pain and regret for them. Therefore, a sound heart is the condition not only for entering the Heaven of *Barzakh*, but also for benefiting from it. Heaven is a pure and healthy environment. Only those who are spiritually pure and healthy can truly enjoy it.

The Fate of an Unsound Heart in the *Barzakh*

If a person's heart leaves this world burdened with sicknesses such as hatred, jealousy, arrogance, or worldly sorrow, and those sicknesses remain untreated, that heart becomes incompatible with the nature of *Barzakh*. Such a heart cannot enter Heaven because Heaven is a realm of complete purity and soundness, and nothing unsound can enter it.

This kind of heart requires a stage of healing—a phase that Islamic teachings describe as the Barzakh Hell. This Hell is not simply a place of punishment, but more like a hospital, designed to cleanse and heal the impurity and sicknesses of the heart. A useful comparison is that of a newborn who enters the world with birth defects. That baby must stay in the hospital and endure medication and intensive care in order to recover. In a similar way, the sick heart must undergo the pains and pressures of purification in the Barzakh Hell until it becomes sound. These difficulties are not acts of cruelty. Rather, they are a form of spiritual rehabilitation, intended to turn the heart into its aligned state with Heaven.

The length of this healing process depends on several factors: the type, severity, and number of diseases of their heart. Some hearts have only a small weakness, and they are improved with a short period of suffering. Others carry deep-rooted spiritual sicknesses and must go through years of pressure and pain before they are purified. Once the heart reaches a state of health, it becomes compatible with the nature of Heaven, and the suffering comes to an end.

The law of *Barzakh* is clear. Only what we have built in this world can be carried into the next. In the Barzakh, the human heart is the main factor that determines a person's fate. A sound heart naturally aligns with Heaven and enters it without obstacles. A sick heart, however, must go through a necessary healing process in Hell. This treatment may be brief or long, depending on the heart's condition. But in the end, the final destination for purified hearts is Heaven. Reason tells us that we should care for the soundness of our hearts while we are still in this world, before entering the *Barzakh*. We must cure our moral and spiritual sicknesses, purify our intentions, and correct our inner character. Every false belief, every

impure intention, and every corrupt trait weakens the heart's harmony with the *Barzakh*. These defects make the heart in need of painful healing in Hell. Only those who have prepared their hearts for the next world will experience peace and joy in the *Barzakh*.

References

- [1]. The Quran, 53:39
- [2]. Ibid, 26:88-89
- [3]. Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *Ain-Al Hayat, the Essence of Life*. Sayyid Tahir Bilgrami, Qom, Ansariyan Publication.