

***Barzakh* and the Judgment Day: Revealing the True Essence of the Human Being**

Why Is Knowing the Connection Between *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day Important for Contemporary Life?

Human life does not end with death; rather, death is the beginning of a new stage of life, which is referred to in religious texts as the hereafter. However, this path is not sudden or immediate; it has stages. The first stop is the *Barzakh*, the intermediate realm where the inward truth of humans is revealed. Following this comes the Judgment Day, where the complete truth is manifested in its most expansive form.

While *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day appear to be two independent worlds or stations, they are actually two different levels and forms of a single truth: the manifestation of human's inward self. *Barzakh* is the partial manifestation of truth, and the Judgment Day is its complete picture. If we consider *Barzakh* to be the minor Judgment Day (*Qiyamat as-sughra*), then the Judgment Day is the expansion of that very inward truth, a place where nothing remains hidden or concealed, and every inward state is fully revealed.

Knowing the relationship between these realms is not merely a matter of belief; rather, it transforms our perspective on life in this world. The essential question is not where these realms are located, but rather what relationship they have with our contemporary life and which layers of human's inward self they reveal. If we know that death is merely a veil that is lifted, and that which is rooted in us will

become manifest in the subsequent stages, we will become more precise and cautious in our thoughts, choices, and lifestyle. The continuity of these realms shows that no stage of human life is disconnected from another. This world is like a seed, *Barzakh* is the initial sprouting, and the Judgment Day is the time of the final harvest [1]!

In this lesson, we will first examine the essence of *Barzakh* as the minor Judgment Day and its role in the manifestation of human's true essence. We will then analyze the differences and similarities between *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day. Finally, we will explain the practical and educational implications of this knowledge for contemporary life.

The Realm of *Barzakh*: The Manifestation of the Inward State and the True Image of Human Existence

The realm of *Barzakh* can be considered a mirror where the true essence of a person is revealed. In the material world, a person can present a different face than their inward self, using a superficial mask to hide many of their habits, intentions, or weaknesses. However, in *Barzakh*, all veils are removed, and whatever is rooted and genuine in the individual's existence is disclosed without any cover. For this reason, it has been said that *Barzakh* is a place where the outward and the inward become one, and no distance remains between pretense and reality.

Throughout life, a person acquires and assimilates a collection of deeds, temperaments, thoughts, and habits. This collection gradually shapes our inner structure and stable personality, the very thing the Holy Quran refers to as *Shakilah* (disposition/ character). The Quran states that everyone acts according to their

own disposition [2]. What appears on the surface as everyday choices fundamentally becomes an intrinsic part of one's being. In the realm after death, this very *Shakilah* manifests in a concrete and tangible form. It is as if what was internal is now transformed into an external image.

Moral virtues such as honesty, patience, justice, kindness, and forgiveness appear in *Barzakh* as calming, comforting forces and companions. Conversely, moral vices like arrogance, greed, envy, and anger turn into frightening figures. Sometimes, these vices manifest in the form of predatory animals or unknown, terrifying creatures, to the extent that the person possessing those attributes is terrified by their sight. This embodiment of attributes is an undeniable truth that shows no inner trait or characteristic remains without effect.

For this reason, *Barzakh* has been called the minor Judgment Day. What will manifest on the Judgment Day with all its intensity and dimensions appears in *Barzakh* in a more limited and preliminary form. The fundamental difference between *Barzakh* and the world is that in the world, there is still the opportunity for change, reform, and repentance. We can review our path and create a different future. However, in *Barzakh*, this opportunity is lost. It is not a place for new deeds; it is only a realm for the manifestation of the truth that a person has constructed throughout their life. *Barzakh* is an intermediate stage between the world and the Judgment Day. It is not the material world where one can conceal their reality through pretense and deception. It is not the Judgment Day, where all the dimensions of truth are immediately unveiled. Instead, it is a stage where the outward of human is revealed in a preliminary and cautionary way. This manifestation carries a serious message: None of our virtues or vices remain

without effect. What we cultivate within ourselves today will appear before us tomorrow in *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day with its true face. Knowing this truth holds a clear message for contemporary life. If we wish to encounter a calm and luminous figure in *Barzakh*, we must work on building our inward self in this world. Every choice, relationship, thought, and behavior is like a seed planted in the soil of our existence. This seed will bloom in *Barzakh* and bear fruit on the Judgment Day. Therefore, if we seek peace and bliss in that realm, we must shape it within ourselves, starting from this world. *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day are not separate from us; they are the continuation and reflection of our existential truth. In those realms, no mask or pretense will be effective. The only asset that will aid a person is their pure inward self and true essence.

The Differences and Similarities Between *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day in Unveiling the Truth

When discussing life after death, one of the main questions is: What is the place of *Barzakh* in relation to the Judgment Day, and what is their relationship? Both can be considered mirrors where a person's inward self is revealed. In this world, there is a possibility for secrecy, pretense, and concealing one's flaws, but after death, these veils are lifted. The only difference lies in the extent and scope of the manifestation of truth. In the intermediate stage, *Barzakh*, a person's truth is revealed in a limited and relative manner, whereas in the final arena, the Judgment Day, all the dimensions of their existence will be displayed fully and unveiled.

The similarity between these two realms is that both are the scene of the embodiment of human's deeds and attributes. The very traits nurtured throughout

one's lifetime manifest objectively before the individual after death. In the realm of *Barzakh*, these attributes manifest in a preliminary and tangible form, while their intensity and scope reach their peak in the arena of the Judgment Day. The Holy Quran affirms this, stating: "The Day every soul will find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil" [3].

This verse indicates that humans will ultimately be confronted with the true face of their own deeds, leaving no room for denial or concealment. However, the differences are significant: In the first stage, *Barzakh*, there is a limited accountability; only a part of a person's truth is revealed, and the final judgment is deferred. On the Judgment Day, this accountability is complete and comprehensive. Not only manifest deeds, but also hidden intentions, inner thoughts, and even moments that were never expressed are disclosed [4]. The scope of this judgment in narrations is likened to fifty stations (*Mawqif*), each lasting for a thousand years [5]. This expression signifies an intensity that bears no similarity to the preceding stage.

If we consider *Barzakh* to be a summary of a person's existential truth, the Judgment Day is its complete and full version. For this reason, it is said that anyone who wishes to grasp their ultimate destiny need only pay attention to their *Barzakh* state. This is because the same truth continues and reaches its climax on the Judgment Day and the hereafter.

The relationship between these two realms serves as a serious warning for contemporary life. Anyone who neglects to reform their inner self and build their character in this world will find that the same flaws and shortcomings first appear as suffering and anxiety in *Barzakh*, and then are revealed with manifold intensity

on the Judgment Day. From this perspective, *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day are not two separate paths but two stations on a single road, a road that illuminates a person's inward self-stage by stage until, ultimately, everything is completely unveiled with full clarity.

What Message Does Understanding the Relationship Between *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day Hold for Human Life in This World?

The discussion regarding the relationship between the stages after death is not merely a theoretical or purely theological topic. In truth, it is considered a blueprint for human's life today. If we believe that this world and the subsequent realms are completely interconnected, our perspective on life will change. The world is not just a brief passage; it is a workshop in which the truth of our existence is shaped, the very truth that will be revealed after death.

This knowledge carries at least three important educational and ethical messages:

1. The Priority is the inner self, not the outward appearance!

In everyday life, many people try to project a beautiful and acceptable image of themselves. However, in the world after death, what matters is the inward self of the person. A virtue that has taken root in our soul will appear there as a calming and comforting force accompanying us. Conversely, if a vice has permeated our soul, it will manifest as a horrifying and tormenting figure.

2. No trait or attribute disappears.

The Quran states: "So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it" [6]. This statement indicates that

even the smallest behaviors, intentions, and thoughts remain within the human soul and will one day manifest openly. No virtue is left without effect, and no hidden sin is eliminated.

3. Awareness is a motivation for correct choices.

Death does not mean a change of location. It is a veil that is drawn aside to reveal the true essence. Therefore, every choice and decision we make today determines the image of our tomorrow. This awareness compels us to be more vigilant over our thoughts, intentions, and behaviors. A better life depends on building a pure inward self.

After this world, the human being faces two important stations: *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day. These two are not separate from one another; rather, they are the continuation of the very path that began within us. knowing this connection places a heavy responsibility upon us, far beyond being merely an item of theological knowledge. It shows that our life today determines our tomorrow in *Barzakh* and on the Judgment Day. If we wish to encounter peace in *Barzakh* and achieve a bright and good outcome on the Judgment Day, we must build our world correctly. The world is a farm whose harvest will be revealed tomorrow.

In your opinion, what effect does the awareness of the relationship between *Barzakh* and the Judgment Day have on our worldview and lifestyle in this world? To what extent do you pay attention, in your daily life, to the connection between this world and the subsequent realms and their role in your destiny?

References

- [1]. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v. 7, p. 353; v. 73, p.148.
- [2]. Holy Quran, 17:84
- [3]. Holy Quran, 3:30
- [4]. Holy Quran, 86:9 (“The Day that (all) things secret will be tested.”)
- [5]. Al-Shaykh al-Tusi, *Al-Amali*, v. 1, p.38.
- [6]. Holy Quran, 99: 7-8