

Why Has the Desire for Immortality Become Weaker, and How Can It Be Revived?

If the Desire for Immortality Is Innate, Why Do We Avoid Eternity?

Imagine a family that has received an invitation to a glorious celebration. Attending this event would bring joy and offer lasting benefits for every member. Yet not everyone reacts the same way. Some get ready with excitement, others hesitate, and a few do not feel like going at all. Each person has a reason: One is tired, another is overwhelmed by unfinished tasks, and a third is worried about missing something at home. As a result, despite the value of the invitation, people do not show eagerness equally.

This scene mirrors our own response to the desire for immortality and our journey toward eternity. Every human being naturally feels drawn to lasting life and eternity, because the Spirit of God is birthed into us [1]. Yet in practice, many of us ignore this inner call. The noise of daily life and our attachment to contemporary concerns crowd our minds so much that eternity becomes a marginal thought. However, if this desire remains awake and active, it can guide our choices and shape our behavior.

Modern humans flee from death more than ever before, yet they think about eternity less than ever. They want to remain forever, but they search for this sense of permanence within a limited world. The desire for immortality turns into a desire for worldly life. As a result, most of their efforts revolve around escaping death instead of preparing for eternal life. This shift in perspective reveals a deep

negligence, one that lies at the root of much of today's spiritual coldness and indifference.

When a person forgets both their relationship with the Creator and their final destination, the call to eternity loses its significance. The world, which is meant to be a pathway for growth, becomes the ultimate goal. Returning to one's true self and remembering the eternal place that belongs to humanity is the most effective way to awaken this forgotten desire. Once revived, it lifts a person from simply wanting to remain in the world to longing for everlasting existence.

Internal Obstacles to the Desire for Immortality

If human beings are innately drawn to immortality, why have so many of us turned away from it? The answer must first be sought within ourselves. Weak understanding, neglect of our true self, and the gap between belief and behaviors all weaken the desire for immortality in our hearts.

1. Self-Forgetting and a Wrong Understanding of Human Identity

The greatest inner obstacle is ignorance about one's truth of existence. When a person defines themselves only through physical, mental, or social abilities, naturally their goals remain limited to those dimensions. Forgetting the divine and eternal aspect of the soul makes eternity seem distant and unreal. A person may hear about it, yet it does not play any role in their daily life. Someone who has forgotten their true self loses the motivation to move toward eternal life because the destination no longer feels near or meaningful. Instead, it becomes a vague and ineffective idea.

2. Weak Certainty Regarding Eternal Life

Many of us speak about life after death, yet this belief has not fully entered our hearts as *ma'rifa*. Superficial knowledge of the hereafter cannot create lasting longing within us. When belief in eternity remains only as information in the mind and does not influence decisions or behaviors, the desire for immortality gradually fades. True certainty grows when a person sees the impact of eternity reflected in everyday experiences and uses this belief as a criterion for evaluating their decisions, relationships, behaviors, and thoughts.

3. Lack of Awareness About Life's Ultimate Destination

A person who does not know why they live or where their journey leads spend their abilities and talents on short, limited, and temporary pursuits. At times, we seek lasting significance through career achievements, social status, or academic success. Yet even after reaching these goals, an inner emptiness often remains. These accomplishments provide only a temporary answer to our need for immortality and cannot fulfill it completely. When conscious connection to eternity is absent or grows weak, the direction of life becomes distorted. A person follows many goals, but none of them lead to lasting peace. In such a state, the desire for immortality, which could have been a constructive and guiding force, becomes a vague and ineffective tendency.

4. Weak Willpower and Spiritual Laziness

A lack of interest in eternity does not always come from ignorance. Sometimes, a person knows the truth but does not have the willpower to act on it. Imam Ali (Peace be upon him) says, "Laziness corrupts one's hereafter" [2]. Even in someone

who understands the path, reluctance to act weakens the desire for immortality. A person who is used to delaying and postponing loses the motivation to grow and achieve perfection. Over time, they become indifferent to their eternal future. Such people still feel the desire for immortality, but they do not have the power to turn it into determination and movement.

The desire for immortality fades when the link between knowledge, faith, and willpower becomes weak or breaks completely. Knowledge without faith remains shallow. Faith without willpower stays at the level of a mere feeling. Willpower without knowledge leads a person astray. Human beings can prepare for eternity only when they know themselves, develop deep belief in everlasting life, and make conscious decisions based on that belief.

External Obstacles to the Desire for Immortality

Just as internal obstacles arise within the human being, external ones come from the environment in which people grow and live. Modern humans live in a world that constantly invites them to remain focused on the present and forget their eternal future. Media, cultural patterns, and social pressures confine the mind to the limits of today, leaving little room for reflection on eternity.

These external influences do not affect only those who deny the hereafter and eternal life. Even believers who accept eternal life may lose their inner enthusiasm if they become consumed by such environments. The desire for immortality does not disappear from their hearts, but it becomes weaker. Their minds become occupied with the path and its daily details rather than the ultimate destination. Faith that is not protected can be easily weakened by the pressures of the surrounding world.

1. The Dominance of Everyday Distractions

In modern life, human beings are busier than ever before, but this busyness is often about entertainment and consumption rather than growth and perfection. Public culture keeps people trapped in a cycle of work, pleasure, and competition, leaving little space to think about the ultimate purpose of creation. A mind constantly exposed to fleeting images and short-lived excitement no longer has the capacity to reflect on eternity. In such an environment, the longing for eternal permanence shrinks into a desire for attention or quick achievements.

2. Social Role Models Defined by Worldly Success

When a society celebrates its heroes for their wealth, fame, or power, the desire for immortality in that society takes the same misguided direction. In such a culture, the ideal successful person is the one who gains the most from this world, not the ones who prepare themselves for eternal life. As a result, the value system of the society gradually weakens belief in eternity, and worldly success replaces the true purpose of human life.

3. Social Pressure and the Anxiety of Falling Behind

Constant pressure to reach worldly achievements forces people into a never-ending competition. This competition occupies the mind so completely that even death, which should remind us of eternity, becomes distant and insignificant. A person prefers to avoid thinking about it because in the rush of daily life there is no time for pause or self-reflection.

Imam Ali (Peace be upon him) reminds us of a painful truth: “I have never seen a kind of faith that comes with certainty more resembling than the doubt of the human being. They entrust bodies to the graves and go to funeral processions every day, yet they return to the delusions of the world and they do not relinquish desires and sins. If there were no sin or judgment except this very death that separates families, scatters gatherings, and leaves children orphaned, it would still be enough reason to turn away from this exhausting world.” This description applies to human beings in every era. We see death, still we become so absorbed in daily life that we forget eternity.

When a society’s values revolve around pleasure, profit, and competition, the human mind and heart gradually turn away from thinking about immortality. To keep the desire for immortality alive, we must build an environment where remembrance of death, reflection on our final destination, and connection with people whose presence reminds us of eternal purpose are part of daily life. Meeting and speaking with such individuals awakens the desire for immortality, just as collective negligence can silence it.

In this lesson, we explored why the desire for immortality has grown weaker in the life of modern humans. Internal factors such as ignorance of one’s true essence, weak belief in eternal life, lack of purpose, and weak willpower all diminish the longing to move toward eternity. External factors, including the dominance of everyday distractions, worldly-centered role models, and social pressure to chase short-term success, keep the mind so occupied that it no longer finds space to reflect on eternity. As a result, a human being who is innately drawn to immortality ends up striving for this world rather than preparing for eternal life.

Reviving this desire becomes possible only when the connection between knowledge, faith, and behavior is restored. When a person gains deeper self-knowledge, strengthens their belief in eternity in depth of heart, and expresses this belief through their choices and lifestyle, the desire for immortality moves beyond a vague feeling and becomes a constructive force in their path of growth.

What do you think are the most significant obstacles to understanding and remembering eternity in today's world? Share your thoughts and experiences with us and with other readers in the comments section.

References

[1]. Quran, 38:72

[2]. Majlesi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 6, p. 174.