

## **Faith in the Unseen: Its Concept and Impact on Life, Relationships, and Behavior**

### **What Role Does Faith in the Unseen Play in the Formation of Our Personality and Lifestyle?**

To find the right path in life, we need a fixed and reliable point, a point that can free us from anxiety and doubt and enable us to establish the correct orientation. The Quran calls this point faith in the unseen, a belief that is the primary condition for guidance and the criterion for the steadfastness of our personality.

In the Quran's perspective, the unseen is a collection of hidden, yet influential truths upon which the universe's order is administered. These truths include: the Presence of Allah, angels, *Malakut*, the hereafter, Heaven, Hell, and the supremacy of the inward realm of existence over the outward realm. Although our lives seemingly rely on material means, no phenomenon occurs without a divine, unseen command and celestial (*Malakuti*) planning. Whether we know it or not, we are constantly accompanied by the unseen. The more we believe in this truth, the more precise our life's orientation will become, and the deeper our peace will be. Faith in the unseen must not be regarded merely as faith in an invisible realm. Rather, faith in the unseen is the acceptance of this truth that the visible and sensible world is the shallowest layer of truth, and the root of all matters lies in a higher plane of existence. Ignoring this truth leads to an incomplete understanding of ourselves, God, and the world of creation, causing our behaviors to be shaped by short-term calculations. However, the person who believes in the wise administration of the unseen world will find their choices, behaviors, and perspective on life utterly

transformed. Faith is something far beyond knowing; it means putting knowledge into action and converting it into an asset. A person who practically believes in and relies on the unseen will prefer God's pleasure over the pleasure of creation and will not view hardships as dead ends.

Belief in the unseen is rooted in the truth of existence and the structure of our being. In this lesson, we aim to examine the essence of the unseen, its role in the path of human guidance, the relationship between faith in the unseen and the discovery of the truth of existence, the hidden mechanisms of the universe's administration, and the effects of accepting the unseen on human relationships and lifestyle.

### **The Essence of the Unseen and the Role of Faith in the Unseen on the Path of Guidance**

Growth on the path of guidance is shaped in proportion to our knowledge and heartfelt belief in the unseen. Anyone who does not believe in the unseen, that is, God, angels, the hereafter, Heaven, and Hell, cannot set foot on the path of guidance. The Quran presents faith in the unseen as the primary characteristic of a true believer and the first condition for guidance [1]. This means that the criterion for discerning a true believer is directly proportional to the presence of the unseen in their life. Our capacity to withstand difficulties is also dependent on this degree of faith, just as we proclaim in our prayers: "It is You we worship and You we ask for help" [2]. If this recitation does not go beyond mere verbal repetition, we will turn to forces that are themselves in need, rather than relying on God. The consequence of this is anxiety and frustration.

The unseen stands in contrast to intuition. It refers to what is not perceived by the outward senses, yet plays a role in existence. A collection of existential realms, such as *Jabarut*, *Malakut*, World of Names, and angels, are part of this vast expanse. Benefiting from the guidance of the Quran becomes possible only when we believe in the inner truth of these realms. Those who lack a sound belief in the unseen often resort to a materialistic and secular interpretation of the Quran. By dismissing the inner, esoteric dimension of the verses, they fall into error in understanding them. Without faith in the unseen, our perspective on ourselves, the universe, revelation, and Allah remains fundamentally incomplete.

The unseen possesses a clear structure and definite order. The notion that the hereafter is a place that comes into existence after this material world is an incorrect perception. The system of creation originates from the unseen and proceeds to the material realm: first “He” (*Hu*), then Allah, the Divine Names and Attributes, the creation of the light of the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) as the first beings and the most perfect examples [3], the teaching of the Quran to these lights, and ultimately, our creation. The Quran outlines this very sequence in *Surah Ar-Rahman*: “The Most Beneficent taught the Quran, created humanity.” Before the creation of the world, the perfect role model or mentor of humans was already equipped with the “weapon of the Quran,” ensuring that no human would be left without clarity and guidance upon entering the world. According to this cosmic order, the hereafter precedes this world, and the material world emerged from its core [4].

A true believer is one who always keeps this eternal expanse in view, seeing the world as a mere shell over the truth. Although the unseen is not seen, it is not

separate from us. The distance from it is a veil, not a spatial gap. Faith in the unseen is like the situation of the fetus in the womb. He cannot see the outside world, but he is not disconnected from it. Our true value lies in believing in these unseen truths whose effects are clearly manifest in our lives [5]. The Quran, after removing doubt, states the first condition for guidance as faith in the unseen, followed by performing prayer and spending in the way of God. True faith paves the way for happiness, security, and the achievement of eternal blessings. The ultimate goal cannot be attained through mere outward obligations or a form of religiosity born only of fear and habit.

### **The Relationship between Faith in the Unseen and Discovering the True Self**

Belief in the unseen is not exclusively related to the external world. A significant part of the unseen resides within ourselves, a part that is not seen, yet shapes the truth of our personality. Without knowing this inner unseen, the path of spiritual growth cannot begin, and the Divine dimension of our existence will not find an opportunity to manifest.

The first step toward true faith and belief in the unseen is belief in the unseen essence of the soul: We must know the divine truth hidden within us, become familiar with it, and love it. The purpose of our creation is also focused on this very unseen dimension. If our life is defined solely within the confines of the body and worldly desires, it will mislead us from the path of being a true human. We must know our divine self, whose destiny and beloved is God. One of the crucial goals of the prophets' mission and the revelation of divine books has been the nurturing of this dimension.

The manifestation of this inner truth is not easy. The layers of the physical body, animalistic pleasures, and even certain aspects of the intellect often resist it. They resist because they know that with the manifestation of this dimension, their own dominion will diminish. Sometimes, even the intellect falls under the command of the estimative faculty to prevent this hidden truth from being revealed.

The relationship between self-knowledge (*Ma'rifa al-Nafs*) and belief in the unseen is clear. The more we know the truth of ourselves, the easier our connection to the unseen becomes. This is because the language of the true self is the language of the unseen. One cannot perform prayers with the animal dimension of the soul and expect light and tranquility. These are the fruits of the manifestation of that very true self that God loves. Hence, it has been said: "Whoever does not know his own self knows nothing" [6].

Faith in the unseen aspect of the self means believing that within us lies a hidden truth which, if manifest, would transform our lives. Whoever discovers this truth has gained everything, and whoever fails to find it, even if they know everything, will ultimately remain impoverished.

### **Faith in the Unseen and the Hidden Mechanisms of Managing the World**

The world we live in is outwardly material, but its planning flows through a hidden layer called the unseen. Faith in the unseen means accepting that no phenomenon, from the movement of planets and the behavior of particles to the growth of a plant and the formation of an embryo, is managed by purely material mechanisms. The material world is merely a shell covering a deeper reality whose roots lie in *Malakut*.

Angels are among the most important agents of the unseen realm, managing the most minute affairs of life, such as the flow of blood, blinking, hair growth, nutrient absorption, the formation of embryos, and even spiritual transformations. Our life flows through the power and might of *Malakut* [7]. If this divine grace were to be cut off for a single moment, we would lose the capacity for any activity.

Sleep is a clear example of our nearness to the unseen world. In sleep, the physical body steps aside, and we function with our facsimile body (our body in *Barzakh*). The closeness of this body to the material body is so profound that sometimes the effects of the pleasures or fears related to *Barzakh* manifest themselves as physical reactions. This shows that our separation from the unseen is not spatial; rather, the veil of negligence prevents us from seeing it. Those engaged in spiritual striving who have attained mastery over the physical body see some of the unseen truths even while awake, due to the thinning of these veils. The fewer our inner impurities and the greater our attention to the unseen, the stronger our perception of the unseen becomes.

Our deeds also find their meaning in the system of the unseen. Acts of worship, remembrance, supplication, prayer, pilgrimage, charity, patience, and love are not merely outward acts; they possess an unseen form, and their light is activated in our souls in that very moment. If someone does not feel this effect, it is due to negligence, not the absence of the effect. Based on the connection between the soul and the grave, every deed instantly activates its unseen form within us. A person who perceives the presence of the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them) and the angels accompanying them can endure hardships more easily, as they taste the effect of this companionship within their soul.

Unseen forces have also played a constant role throughout history. The Quran speaks of the support given to believers by an unseen army [8]. The Prophets were seemingly alone, but by relying on the unseen, they built the great pathways of history. Angels descended in battles, hearts were prepared during prophetic invitations, and unseen succor occurred in times of distress. Faith in the unseen means trusting this divine system that actively works behind the scenes of the world.

An individual who believes in the unseen does not confine their understanding of life to narrow, evident causes. They believe that thousands of hidden factors are flowing through the world. Such an individual benefits from the light of their deeds in their worship and daily life. They know that the unseen realm constantly accompanies us, and by simply removing the veils of negligence, this companionship can be perceived.

### **The Effects of Faith in the Unseen on Our Relationships and Lifestyle**

Faith in the unseen means seeing oneself as surrounded by a hidden truth that is always with us, whether we pay attention to it or not. The difference lies in this: Some bring this companionship into the calculus of their lives, while others rely solely on their limited capabilities. This is the starting point for anxiety, unhealthy competition, exhaustion, and restlessness. God defines the first condition for guidance as “Those who believe in the unseen” because tranquility begins here.

The word for faith (*Iman*) is derived from the root '*Amn*' (security). The heart only finds security when it relies on God, the hereafter, the angels, and the reckoning. Someone who does not believe in the unseen becomes afflicted by fear and doubt

at the slightest worldly change. However, a believer who relies on the unseen displays fundamentally different behavior in their choices and relationships. Whoever seeks the pleasure of the people despite the discontent of Allah, Allah will entrust him to the people. This perspective shows that relying on outward means ultimately makes the individual more vulnerable. The criterion for every person's worth is proportional to their reliance on the unseen.

Belief in the unseen also profoundly impacts human relationships. The believer sees themselves and others in the presence of God, the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), and the angels. They regulate their behavior based on the law of sameness (s/he is You; s/he is the Messenger of God; s/he is God). This means that in confronting any individual, it is as if they are standing before God and His Messenger. Therefore, one cannot act disrespectfully, selfishly, or violently. This perspective is further supported by a narration from Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) which states, “The beggar is the messenger of Allah” [9]. The stronger the belief in the unseen, the more divine color our behaviors take on.

A person who does not receive happiness, peace, and inner strength from the unseen has not yet reached the stage of true connection. An act of worship that does not generate light and insight is merely a physical hardship. The effects of true faith must be visible in one's choices, behavior toward family, crisis management, and daily tranquility. Security is granted to those who have faith in the unseen [10].

Distrust in the unseen is the source of anxiety, greed, regret, and despair. Someone who does not take eternity seriously will shatter in the face of the smallest worldly trouble. However, the believer in the unseen remains hopeful and balanced even

in the most difficult circumstances. Imam Sadiq (Peace be upon him), upon hearing the news of his son's death, said: “Glory be to the One Who kills our children, and we do not increase for Him except in love” [11]. This is the pinnacle of security that is attained through faith in the unseen.

Faith in the unseen means accepting that the root of everything lies in a hidden layer. This belief is the first condition for guidance and the foundation for security, tranquility, sound decision-making, and the formation of personality. The deeper our faith in this inner root becomes, the more distinct our perspective on the world, relationships, and problems will be, and the divine dimension of our existence will find a greater opportunity to manifest itself.

What is your definition of the unseen and belief in it? Has faith in unseen truths affected your life and your perspective on the world of creation? Please share your thoughts.

## References

- [1]. Holy Quran, 2:2-3
- [2]. Holy Quran, 1:5
- [3]. Al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, [v. 25, p. 32](#).
- [4]. Al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, [vol. 30, p 56](#).
- [5]. Holy Quran, 2:4
- [6]. “Do not be ignorant of yourself for indeed the one who is ignorant about himself is ignorant about everything.” (Ali ibn Abi Talib (Peace be upon him), [Exalted Aphorisms and Pearls of Speech](#). Translated by Tahir Ridha Jaffer. Qom: Ansariyan Publications, 2012, p. 901, Hadith 250.
- [7]. “There is no might and no power except by Allah, by the might and strength of Allah I rise and I sit.”
- [8]. Holy Quran, 9:26, 33:9
- [9]. “The suppliant is the messenger of the lord of the world, wherefore he who gives to him gives to God and he who denies him, repels God.” (Al-Nu‘mān al-Maghribī, *Pillars of Islam, Acts of Devotion and Religious*, ed. Ismail Kurban Husein Poonawala. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002, vol. 1, p. 303).
- [10]. Holy Quran, 6:82
- [11]. Al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, [vol. 79, p 128](#).