

The Souls Journey After Death

As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”

“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa.

May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”

In the name of Allah most merciful, most compassionate

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week’s topic will be on the soul’s journey after death.

The afterlife is not a philosophical matter in Islam. It is a reality that every prophet sent to mankind, peace be upon them all, has warned his people about.

Belief in life after death in Islam is a pillar of faith, a pre-requisite to being a believer. If there were no belief in the Hereafter, people would feel free to do as they please, at least to the limits that other people would set for them and enforce. They would only have their personal desires as a guide for behavior and belief. They would not feel accountable for the deeds that are hidden from the knowledge of society.

A belief in the Hereafter helps us to keep in mind that there is a God, Allah, and He has prepared a great reward for those who do good and a severe punishment for those who only follow their selfish desires. Allah mentions the afterlife in a vast number of verses:

“O, you who have attained to faith! Hold fast unto your belief in God and His Apostle, and in the divine writ which He has bestowed from on high upon His Apostle, step by step, as well as in the revelation which He sent down aforetime: for he who denies God, and His angels, and His revelations, and His apostles, and the Last Day, has indeed gone far astray.” (4:136)

“Did you, then, think that We created you in mere idle play, and that you would not have to return to Us?” (23:115)

“Those who reject Our signs and the meeting in the Hereafter – vain are their deeds: can they expect to be rewarded except as they have wrought?” (7:147)

All humans are on a journey passing through (1) the realm of the (created) souls (2) the mother’s womb (3) the life of this world (4) the realm of Barzakh (the grave) (5) eternal life in Heaven or Hell. We are merely moving from one station to another ’til we reach our final destination. It is a journey which each of us must make alone, taking full responsibility for every decision we make and for every step we take.

We are like guests in this world, waiting to reach our final settlement; therefore we should be ready to depart at any time, waiting for our train to arrive and take us to

the next stop. Therefore getting too comfortable in this world would be a mere mistake and also rude to Our Host.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This life in the grave or Interspace is the next part of our journey. An 'interspace' is something that separates two things: heaven and earth, this world and the Next World or the period between death and resurrection. The bliss or punishment of the Interspace is not the same as that of the Hereafter, but rather something that happens between the two worlds.

In death, the body remains in the ground while the soul is in the Interspace or Barzakh between the two worlds. Barzakh is the stage between the worldly life and Qiyaamah. A person enters into this temporary stage from the time the soul leaves the body, to the time of resurrection. Allah says: **“(In falsehood they will be) until, when death comes to one of them he says ‘oh my Lord, send me back (to life), in order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected.’ By no means! It is but a word he utters and before them is a partition (Barzakh) till the Day they are raised up”**. (23:99-100)

Allah will order that the soul be returned back to the earth after its book has been recorded in either Illiyyeen or Sijjeen (places where the books of deeds of people are kept).

Both the body and the soul are involved in the time spent in the grave or Barzakh stage. The two are still connected and so the bliss or punishment is experienced by both of them. When Allah desires bliss or punishment for the soul, He connects it to the body. This is dependent on the will of Allah and dependent on a person's own actions.

Mental faculties will be restored to the dead in the graves. The deceased are also aware of the comforting presence of the righteous people around the grave at the time of burial. They also hear their footsteps when they leave them. The Prophet (saw) once mentioned the tormenter of the grave and Umar (ra) asked: **“Will our faculties be restored to us, Oh Messenger of Allah?”** He (saw) said: “Yes, just as they are now”. The Prophet (saw) said: **“When a person is laid in his grave and his companions leave his graveside, he will hear their footsteps going away.”** (Bukhari)

During this life in the grave part of our journey the souls are divided into two groups: one group is punished and the other group is in bliss. Usually when we think of the 'grave,' it is a word that inspires fear. We are pained, but not aware of the delight it can contain. Indeed, the bliss of the grave is better than any delight that this world can offer.

The liberated souls of those who are in bliss visit each other and discuss what happened in the world they have left and the people of that world. Allah says, **“Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those whom Allah has blessed, the prophets, the sincere, the martyrs and the righteous. Very excellent companions they are!”** (4:69)

*Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil ‘Aalameen. Was-salaatu was-salaamu alaa Khayril
mursaleen. Muhammadin-nabeey-yil Ummiy-ye, wa-‘alaa aalihee, wa sahabihee,
aj-ma’een.*

Ammaa ba’ad:

*Innalláha wa malaaiikata yusallúna alan nabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallú
alayhi wasalli mú tas leema. Allahumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli
Muhammad, kama salayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma barik ala
Muhammad, wa alaa áli Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali
ibrahim. Fil ála meen, innaka hameedun majeed.”*