

Where Were We Before Birth, and How Did We Come into Existence?

Did We Exist Before Birth? If So, Where Were We?

We all have an innate desire to know where and how we came into existence, and this gives rise to countless questions about life before birth in our minds. This concern is usually more pronounced at a younger age, as children do not have an understanding of the physiological process that leads to the formation of their bodies. As a result, one of the most common questions they often ask their elders is “Where was I before I was born? How did I get into my mommy’s tummy?” and similar questions.

As adults, this concern changes a little and our questions are more focused on understanding and knowing the destination rather than the origin. In fact, as adults, we are more interested in knowing “Where will we go after death?” instead of “Where were we before birth?” Perhaps the reason for this change in perspective is that we think we have found the origin of our lives and the answers to our childhood questions. We know that we are the result of the union of two reproductive cells, male and female, and we imagine that this is the starting point of our lives. However, is this the whole truth?

The answer to the question “Where were we before birth?” is just as important as knowing “Where will we go after death?” If we look more closely, the answer to the first question is more important and is actually the foundation of the second question. This is because the stages of life are not linear, but cyclical, and we will return to the same place we have come from.

Where were we before birth? What evidence is there for this matter?

- Where is the *Alam adh-Dharr*¹ and what was the quality of our existence there?
- What impact does belief in the world before birth have on our lifestyle?

Where Were We Before Birth? What Evidence Is There for This Matter?

To understand where we were before birth, we just need to look within ourselves and extract the answer to this question from our soul. As we explained in previous lessons, we humans are [infinity-seeking](#) and [perfectionist beings](#), and these characteristics are so obvious that they do not need to be proven. We want everything to be perfect and flawless, and we have an insatiable appetite for achieving all kinds of perfections. Naturally, the origin of the desire for infinity cannot be related to our body because the desirer and the desired thing must be compatible with each other. Our body is limited and cannot desire unlimited perfections.

On the other hand, it is impossible for us to desire something that we have not previously experienced or used. For example, if we have never eaten chocolate and never heard its name, we will never crave it. Therefore, if we have the desire for infinity, we have previously experienced and enjoyed being infinite.

We all know that the material world is limited, so we have experienced infinity in a world other than the material world. If we follow this thread, we will reach the world before birth; a place where all of us, along with billions of other

¹. Before we came to this physical world, our souls used to be in a world known as Alam adh-Dharr, in which Allah had taken a promise from all mankind to worship Him. Because it was before the test, it is just like the Almighty Allah had instilled instinctively inside every one of us the knowledge of and the belief in knowing Him. (<https://www.al-islam.org/media/did-we-exist-life>)

humans throughout history, have been a part of the truth that God created as a unified divine soul.

God, as the Infinite Being and Absolute Perfect, created a truth in His first manifestation that is the primary element of creation and is considered the most similar being to God Himself, manifesting all of God's names and attributes. Then, from this first creation, He created other realms; it means that all the realms of the hereafter and this world are created from this truth. This truth is referred to by various names such as the "soul, tablet, pen, intellect, light of Muhammad, the best example of creation, etc."

After the formation of the embryo in this world, this truth passes through all the realms of existence to reach our body, be breathed into it, and give it life. The phrase "My Spirit" in the Quran verse "and I breathed into him of My Spirit"² conveys the same meaning and indicates the intensity of compatibility, closeness, and connection of this truth with God. Thus, all of us were in the arms of God before birth. We did not have gender there, just as we do not have it now. Having a gender and being male or female is related to our body; [our true self](#) is the spirit breathed into us by the command of God³ and does not have material characteristics.

Now that we know the origin of our life goes back to a world other than this world, it is necessary to mention a few related points about this subject in continuation to our discussion.

². Quran, 38:72 (وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوْحِي)

³. "They ask you about "the spirit." Say: "The spirit descends by the command of my Lord, but you have been given only a little knowledge." (Quran, 17:85)

Facts About the *Alam adh-Dharr* and the First Covenant (*Alast*)

In verse 47 of Surah *Al-A'raf*, God refers to a covenant that was taken from the children of Adam at the time of creation, and all humans have confessed to *Tawhid* or Oneness of God in this covenant. Based on this, that world is known as “the *Alam adh-Dharr*” and that covenant is known as the first covenant or “the covenant of *Alast*.” Exegetes have interpreted this verse in different ways, some of which may make us misunderstand the meaning of this verse. Since our discussion in this lesson relates to the world before birth, it is a good idea to briefly explain what the covenant of *Alast* really means so that any ambiguity in this regard can be resolved in our minds.

Some people think that we and billions of other humans in the *Alam adh-Dharr* had the same current personality and the same human rational soul, and back there God asked us, “Am I not your Lord?” and each of us testified that “Yes, You are my Lord.” While such an interpretation is wrong. As we stated earlier, we and other humans were a unified soul at the time of creation and did not have separate personalities. These separate personalities were created after the formation of our zygote and our entry into the world. So when God says, “We took a covenant from you,” it does not mean that each of us confessed to the existence of God verbally, but this commitment has been an existential commitment. It means our *fitrah* testified to the existence of God, and in this regard, there is no difference between believers and disbelievers. The *fitrah* of disbelievers is also from the essence of God and is infinite like God. Therefore, if someone denies the existence of God verbally, his perfectionism and desire for infinity prove that God has breathed this spirit into him, and this is not something that can be denied.

What Effect Does the Belief in the Realm Before Birth Have on Our Lifestyle?

The question of where we were before birth is unfortunately a neglected topic that has received little attention. We usually start religious teachings from a halfway point, i.e., from this world; we draw a linear trajectory for ourselves and others that starts from the moment of birth and extends towards the hereafter. This incomplete worldview, first, prevents the original divine teachings from penetrating into the depth of our heart, and secondly, makes us always have doubts and misconceptions about the philosophy of our presence in this world.

Neglecting the origin poses another danger: It turns death into an unknown phenomenon in our minds, causing fear. However, if we know where we have come from, there is no reason to fear death. Do we fear returning home every time we get out of it? Death is also a return that takes us back to our true home and true family. Therefore, if we have lived the right way, death will be the beginning of our pleasures and happiness and not something to worry about.

All our anxieties and depressions are rooted in being away from our true home. We are infinite beings who were in the arms of God before birth and have experienced all perfections and beauties at the highest level. Therefore, it is natural that we cannot fit in with the limited nature of the world. However, the solution to this issue is not sadness and anxiety. The solution is to see ourselves as we truly are, an eternal being who has not been created for this world. We are only travelers in this world for a few days; we are meant to grow, develop, and acquire all the possible human perfections and return home to our True Beloved, which is God. The story of creation is just as fascinating and sweet!

In this lesson, we talked about the origin of existence. We learned that before coming into this world, we were with God for thousands and thousands of years.

Additionally, we learned that believing in the origin of life is just as important as believing in the resurrection. In other words, it is impossible to believe in the resurrection without believing in the origin. This is because resurrection means returning, and without an initial coming, return does not make sense. True belief in the origin and resurrection can heal many of our intellectual and spiritual problems and bring us happiness and peace.

In the upcoming lessons, we will discuss the resurrection and explain the conditions we need to meet for a healthy journey towards it. Before that, we invite you to share what you have learned with us. What information did you have about the world before birth before reading this lesson? Is there any question or ambiguity in your mind that has not been resolved yet?