

How Important Is Our Relationship with Eternity and What Is Meant by Eternal Life?

The Significance of Knowing the Hereafter and Human Eternal Life

As you may recall from previous lessons, we discussed that human beings are constantly “becoming” in moving toward eternity. We are beings that exist from birth to infinity—there is no death for us, and as long as God exists, we exist. The structure of our existence is eternal. We all have had a deep-rooted relationship with eternity since the beginning of creation. In fact, from the moment God created us and we entered this world, we have been on a journey of return. Each of our stories is that of a lover servant who once lived with Allah, experienced the joy of His presence, and is now temporarily placed on this earthly planet. But after completing this journey, they will return to their original home. In essence, our main life has not yet begun; rather, it starts with *wafat* (departure from this world and transfer to the hereafter).

This world serves merely as a womb for us, and without the hereafter, it is meaningless. All our decisions, relationships, thoughts, and behaviors in this world are shaped by the consideration of the hereafter. Therefore, we cannot define and interpret everything solely within the framework of this world. It is futile to expect that everything in the world should serve the animal dimension of our existence without any contradictions or hardships facing this dimension! The world is a place of construction, and we must prepare ourselves for the living conditions of the hereafter. Our main and eternal life begins in the next world [1].

All worldly statuses will disappear in the hereafter. Who we are in this world and what position or rank we hold has no place or value in human eternal life. Unfortunately, most people, due to a lack of true self-awareness, devote all their efforts to the limited life of this world [2]. They see happiness and the purpose of creation in achieving worldly perfections —such as owning a house and a car, traveling to foreign countries, and ensuring their children receive a good education. However, they rarely question where they came from, where their true homeland is, where they are now, where they will go, and what their status in eternity will be!

It is quite clear that if we understand the destination of our eternal journey, along with its characteristics and requirements, we will choose our path properly and move toward our purpose with determination. However, if we do not know our destination, its conditions, and its requirements, we will become confused, anxious, and may never reach our destination—or if we do, it will be with great difficulty and delay. In this lesson, we aim to discuss human eternal life and the significance of relationship with eternity. We will explore the benefits of having an eternal perspective in life and examine the consequences of neglecting it.

Effects and Benefits of an Eternal Perspective on Life

The first effect of believing in human eternal life is that it gives meaning and purpose to our worldly life, saving it from futility. One of the greatest struggles many of us face is the feeling of emptiness in life. However, if we are certain that the destination ahead is not a place of none-existence, but rather the essence of

existence at a higher level, then our lives will be freed from emptiness and will become meaningful.

If someone believes in eternity and views themselves through an eternal lens, they undoubtedly begin to consider what is best for them in both the present and the future, and more importantly, how they must prepare themselves for eternal life. As a result, they will study eternity seriously and prioritize learning about it over other types of knowledge. Such a person aligns all their decisions, relationships, behaviors, and mindset with the hereafter and is always at peace and happiness.

In previous lessons we stated that entering the *Barzakh* and the hereafter, which are billions of times vaster and more advanced than this world, requires suitable equipment according to the living conditions of those realms. As a result, all our efforts -whether in education, marriage, relationship with spouses, parenting, or job promotion- should be directed in such a way that we become like Allah and have a healthy birth into the hereafter. Otherwise, we will suffer a loss.

For someone with an eternal perspective, the greatest concern is to acquire a sound heart. Such an individual constantly strives to acquire divine attributes and align themselves with Almighty Allah, knowing that the quality of their eternal life depends on the divine names and perfections they have absorbed in this world. In other words, in the hereafter, we will feast upon the provisions we have prepared for ourselves in this life. Our eternal life will be shaped by our deeds and our answers to the fifty questions of the Day of Judgment. Our familiarity with these fifty questions depends on our self-knowledge and our relationship with Allah through the process of acquiring knowledge and deeds in the world.

A firm belief in eternal life makes it easier for us to endure all kinds of hardships. It allows us to engage in transaction with God in all aspects of our lives, freeing us from dependency on anyone with whom we might engage in hypocrisy, flattery, or humiliation. When we realize that no one in this world truly owns anything and that everything belongs to Allah, and the ultimate scale is the hereafter, we no longer feel the need for people's praise or admiration and we are always happy and peaceful.

If we know that eternity awaits us, we will never fear loneliness. Instead, we always feel the presence of Allah and our heavenly family at the closest level of connection, knowing that we are constantly under their *rububiyyah* (lordship).

Consequences of Not Believing in Eternal Life

If we remove the element of eternity and immortality from within ourselves, the false self will take the place of our true self. In this case, all our decisions, relationships, thoughts, and behaviors will be misguided. When we attribute ultimate primacy solely to this world, we cannot grasp the concept of eternity. Consequently, Satan can easily manipulate us against Allah, the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), and even against ourselves.

People who are overly sensitive, irritable, ill-tempered, vengeful, or prone to gossip can never occupy their minds and hearts with the thoughts of the hereafter. All our miseries, weaknesses, sins, and failures stem from losing faith in eternity.

A person who does not know their true identity and does not view themselves as an eternal being fails to love themselves as they should. As a result, they define

themselves merely as a being existing from birth to death, considering everything they possess to belong solely to this world, with all their efforts focused entirely on worldly gains. However, even if we wish to enjoy life and be successful in all dimensions of our existence—whether inanimate, vegetative, animal, intellective, or supra-rational—we must always maintain an eternal and everlasting perspective. The moment eternity fades from our vision, blessings turn into suffering, and we fail to benefit from any of the five dimensions of our existence, leading us to be accursed and *maghbun* (loser) in the hereafter.

In this lesson, we discussed human eternal life and the significance of relationship with eternity. We stated that having an eternal perspective not only gives meaning to our worldly life and saves us from aimlessness but also compels us to dedicate all our efforts toward our main and everlasting life. It encourages us to strive for acquiring divine attributes and alignment with Almighty Allah, which is the very purpose of our creation.

What other differences do you think having an eternal perspective will make in our lifestyle? We look forward to your valuable comments.

References

[1]. Quran, 29:64

[2]. Quran, 8:67