

RESURRECTION

المعاد

Objectives >>>

Students should understand:

- The three major proofs for the existence of the day of resurrection:
 - the proof of the Innate Knowledge of the Resurrection
 - the proof of Justice
 - The proof of wisdom
- That both body and soul are resurrected and reunited
- In more detail, the stages/events of the resurrection day described in previous years
- The transience of this world especially in comparison to the eternity of the Hereafter
- That those closest to Allah care about this world only as long they can use it to benefit their Hereafter and the lowly and abased care for this world in and of itself and ignore the Hereafter
- That the pleasures in this world are illusions and are never free from pains, while pleasures in the Hereafter are real and free from any pain
- That Heaven and Hell are the realities of our own actions
- That those who enter Heaven remain there forever, but only those who are stubborn remain in Hell forever
- The levels within both Heaven and Hell
- The role of hope and fear in reaching Heaven and avoiding Hell

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

LESSON 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HEREAFTER

In the previous lessons, we have discussed various aspects of life after this world, from death to Barzakh. In this lesson we shall discuss one of the fundamental beliefs of all major religions, especially Islam: that of Ma'ād or Resurrection. As we have learnt in previous years, there are many names for the Day of Resurrection (Yawmul dīn, Yawmul Qiyāmah, Yawmul Ḥaṣhr, Yawmul Ḥisāb etc.). It should be noted that 'yawm' or 'day' in this context does not mean the regular day (24 hours) as we have it here, this only refers to a period of time which is not describable with the measures of time we know today. This is why the Qur'ān uses very large time spans, such as one thousand years, to describe itⁱ. The other opinion is that it is called 'day' because just like the sun exposes everything, the 'light' of truth will expose the reality of our actionsⁱⁱ.

PROOFS OF THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

1. THE PROOF OF INNATE KNOWLEDGE

Human beings are born with some characteristics already pre-programmed in us. These characteristics are called innate characteristics. Some of these include hunger, thirst, love etc. and as Allah, the Almighty, has pre-programmed these things in us He has also created legitimate and good ways to fulfil them. Loving immortality and the attribute of survival after death is a natural desire of mankind and hence, it appears to have been held by human beings from the earliest of times. The instinct of immortality will not be satisfied unless there is an immortal life after this mortal one.

Creating an innate characteristic and not allowing it to be fulfilled would be vain and incongruent with divine wisdom.

2. PROOF OF WISDOMⁱⁱⁱ

We are living in a meaningful world in which everything has a purpose and an aim. If death were the end of everything the creation of the entire universe would be in vain (without purpose).

3. PROOF OF JUSTICE

Justice is one of God's attributes as mentioned in the previous lessons. The whole universe is established on justice. However, the history of man presented many criminals that never received their full punishment in this world. How many innocent people are killed without their murderers found? How many properties are stolen and the thieves never caught? Therefore, there must be a great day of judgement in which all tyrants, oppressors, and criminals will be judged with justice.

RESURRECTION – AL MA'ĀD

Islam, out of all the 'divine' religions has put a very great emphasis on the concept of the Day of Judgement and the Hereafter. Ma'ād means the re-joining of scattered particles and the joining of the soul to the body after their separation. Ma'ād therefore does not mean that Allah brings something out of non-existence. The question then arises as to how Allah will bring us to life after our body has completely disintegrated?

Once a man called Ibn Abi Khalaf came to the Holy Prophet with an old bone in his hand. He was pressing and crushing it with his hand. When it all became powder he blew it off with his mouth and asked, "Who will make this stuff alive?" It was then that a verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet:

"And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation" (36:78-79)^{iv}

Allah brought us into being from nothing, surely He can bring us back!

PROPHET IBRĀHĪM AND THE BIRDS

On many occasions, Allah, the Almighty has proven this concept through his Prophets. One prominent story is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān is that of Prophet Ibrāhīm (as). He asked Allah to show him how Allah gives life to the dead, so that his heart may be at ease. It is narrated that as directed by Allah, Ibrāhīm (as) took four birds, cut them into very small pieces, mixed them together and put portions of the mixture on the top of four separate mountains, and then called out to them. The birds came flying to him as individual birds, as they were originally!^v This example very clearly demonstrates that certainly the Almighty Allah has the power to bring back the dead to life and make them as they were!

STAGES OF THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

The Holy Prophet described the Resurrection Day as follows. 'Amr was one of the most famous brave and courageous men among Arabs. The history of Islam has recorded him as one of the greatest warriors in a number of battles. Once, when he was a polytheist, he visited the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet (saw) invited him to Islam, and said: "If you believe in Islam, God Almighty will protect you from the greatest fright on the Day of Resurrection." He asked, "O Muḥammad! What is the great fright? I am so tough-hearted that nothing can frighten me." The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

"O 'Amr! It is not so, as you imagined. It will be a tremendously frightening sound, which will make all the dead alive and make the entire living die, except those whom God wishes that they should not die. Then again there will be a terrible roar which will make all the dead stand and line up. The sky will be fragmented. All the mountains will break up and become scattered. Thus there will be no living being whose heart will not be palpating due to fear, remembering the sins committed by it. All will be worrying only about their own selves except those whom God wills (that they may not become restless)."^{vi}

THE BLOWING OF THE TRUMPET

It is narrated^{vii} that the first thing that will happen is the blowing of the trumpet (by the angel Isrāfīl). This is the first sound and it is the point at which every living thing will die (except those Allah wishes). All the remaining humans shall die and also experience Barzakh.

Once all the souls have been taken, the Angel of Death will come to God to report this and Allah will command that even the angel of death die! The second trumpet will be blown and everyone will come back to life.

THE RISING FROM THE GRAVE

One day the angel Gabriel came to the Holy Prophet (saw) and asked, "Would you like to observe the condition of people on the Day of Resurrection?" "Yes," the Prophet replied. Gabriel, the trustworthy angel, took the Holy Prophet to the graveyard of Baqī' (Medina). He kicked a grave and said, "Get up at the order of your Lord." The grave split at once and a man with radiant face raised his head from the grave saying: '(All) praise is due to Allah, Who has made good to us His promise' (39:74). Thereafter, he kicked another grave and said, "Rise up at the command of your Lord." At once, another man with a very ugly and frightened face came out of this grave and said: 'O woe to us!' Gabriel said, "The faithful and the unbelievers will rise up from their graves in this condition."viii

ASSEMBLY ON THE FIELD OF MAḤSHAR

Upon rising from their graves, everyone will be astonished at the sight before them and their own sight. Fear then will set in, such fear that they will wish to flee from the scene and Allah (SWT) says that they will be like **"scattered moths"** (101:4) or **"scattered locusts"** (54:7). On that day, everyone will try to hide themselves from each other; mother will flee from daughter and father from son! Their running away will be of no use! Those who had any connection with God in this world will flee to Allah whilst for others there will be no escape. Realizing that there is no escape, they will ask each other for their share of good deeds but no one will help as they will need whatever they have! It is for the fear of this day that we should gather as many good deeds as we can for ourselves as nothing shall avail us then.

BOOK OF ACTIONS

Soon after, every individual shall be handed their book of actions. In general, the Book of Actions is something that each and every individual or each nation will carry with them which consists of their entire actions in this world, good or bad. Every single action, word or in some cases thought will be recorded. Allah says:

"He utters not a word but there is by him a watcher at hand".
(50:18)

A man once asked the Imam (as) how angels know the good intention of a faithful person? The Imam replied:

"As soon as a servant thinks of doing a good deed his body emanates a pleasing fragrance. So the angels understand it and they record that good intention. When someone thinks of committing an evil, the bad smell of it hurts the angels. If a man thinks of doing good, a good is at once noted in his record of deeds. Then, if he carries out that good deed, ten goods are noted in his record."

On the Day of Resurrection, every soul shall read its Book of Actions. The book will be handed over to its, and only its, author, i.e. the doer. Once you look at your book, every single action accompanied with its real intention is precisely and accurately engraved in the book. It will be the most comprehensive biography ever of the person's life. It contains the entire life of the person, from cradle to the grave. By then:

"...because of what is recorded therein, they will say: Ah! Woe to us! What a book this is! It leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof." (18:49).

We have learnt in previous years that this book is not like a book we know of in this world. It will be a record of our deeds such that even our limbs will testify to our actions!

- Those who believed and did good in this world will be given their book in their right hand. They will be happy and relieved. Just like when we get really good marks in an exam and are proud to show off the result! They will say:

"Surely I knew I shall meet my account. So he shall be in a life of pleasure." (19:69).

- The sinners shall be given their book of actions in their left hand and they will be do ashamed and they would say:

"O would that my book had never been given me: And I had not known what my account was: O would that it had made an end (of me): My wealth has availed me nothing: My authority is gone away from me." (69:25-29)

- There also will be some people in the field of Maḥshar on the Day of Judgement, who will be handed over their records of deeds from behind: *"And as to him who is given his book behind his back, He shall call for perdition, And enter into burning fire."* (84:10-12)

This (giving of record from behind) can be in two ways: First, both of his hands may be tied to his back and his head will be turned so that he can read his record. Another way can be that his left hand will pierce in his chest forcing it to come out of his back and then his face will be turned and he will be ordered to read his record:

“Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day.” (17:14)

QUESTIONING

Before being allowed to proceed through to the *Ṣirāṭ* (which has been discussed in previous years) everyone will be questioned about how they used the bounties and gifts they were given in this world especially how they used their life. The questions will include:

- 1- How did he spend his life and in which deeds was he engaged during his youth?
- 2- Where from and how he or she earned money and where and how they spent it?
- 3- There will be questioning about the *Wilāyah* of Prophet Muḥammad and his progeny (as).^{ix}

Review Questions

Q1. The Proof of Wisdom for the existence of the Resurrection is based on the principle that:

- a. If death was the end, this world and our lives would be in vain and without purpose
- b. Allah is Wise and He would not create a world that is without purpose
- c. Both a & b

Q2. Al Ma'ād means:

- a. The souls being brought back to life
- b. The soul being re-joined to the same body it had in this world
- c. The body bring brought back to life

Q3. The Book of Actions on the day of Judgement contains:

- a. The main events of a person's life and their major sins
- b. Every action performed by a person
- c. Every action, word and even thought of a person

LESSON 2: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER

THE TRANSIENCE OF THIS WORLD AND THE ETERNITY OF THE HEREAFTER

From what we have learnt of the stages of the Day of Judgement, we have to always keep in mind that we have been put in this world to gather as much provision as we can for that Day. The period of time we spend in this world is so short when compared to the Hereafter. Allah says in the Holy Qur'ān:

To Memorise:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَهْوُ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

“And this world's life is naught but a play and an idle sport and certainly the abode of the hereafter is better for those who guard (against evil); do you not then understand?” (6:32)

THE NATURE OF THIS WORLD

One of the primary causes of punishment and suffering in the Hereafter is the love for this world. We often tend to forget the Hereafter and focus only on the temporary pleasures of this world. Allah says in the Qur'ān:

“Beautiful for mankind is love of the joys (that come) from women and offspring; and stored-up heaps of gold and silver, and horses branded (with their mark), and cattle and land. That is comfort of the life of the world. Allah! With Him is a more excellent abode.” (3:14)

It must be kept in mind that all things mentioned in the above verse, being divine blessings, may not be condemned. Moreover, proper use of divine blessings is also not an unworthy thing to do. However, what is undesirable is becoming attached to these things, and giving them a fundamental significance in one's life – an emphasis which may exceed even that given to God.^x

To illustrate this we can use an analogy. There was once a big ship that landed on an Island. The captain said to the people: 'Dear passengers, we will anchor here for you to gather provision and admire the nature and we shall move on with our journey in a few hours' time'. All passengers got off and roamed around the island in groups. Some 'wise' gentlemen and ladies walked peacefully, collected some souvenirs and food for the

journey and returned quickly to the ship. Since they were the first ones back, they got the best and comfortable places on the ship.

The second group of 'forgetful' people walked, played and enjoyed their time. They admired the island and explored its nature. But soon they remembered the ship, so they ran back, without any food and souvenirs. Coming on board, they were tired, but alas the best seats were taken, so they had to do with the less comfortable ones.

The third group of 'Greedy and Lustful' people got amazed by the wonders of this island and they began to collect its plants and precious stones. After a while, having heard the call of their captain, they started to head back to the ship, carrying plants, stones and jewellery of all colours and value. However, the heaviness of the treasure they eagerly wanted to bring back slowed their return, and by the time they reached the shore, the boat had already left.

And finally, some 'Aimless and Narrow-Minded' people, convinced themselves that the island was all there is and the ship was just something they had imagined. They thus explored the island and built for themselves houses. The boat, of course left them to perish on the island and to be forgotten by everyone.

Similarly, on our journey to Allah (SWT), The Creator, we have landed on this island, called the World (Dunyā).

Some 'Wise' people will walk around and collect good deeds, love and knowledge of Allah (SWT) and quickly return to The Creator. They of course will be handed Heaven, the best of it!

The second group of 'Forgetful' people will get distracted by the world (Dunyā) until their last moment. They will then repent and hope that they will be saved from the Hell-fire.

The third group of 'Greedy and Lustful' people will be amazed by the world, and get attracted by its temporary and fake beauty. Perhaps, a call will bring them back to realization, but alas, the attraction will be too much to leave behind and they will miss the ship of salvation.

And finally, some 'Aimless and Narrow-Minded' people will just ignore the journey to Allah (SWT) and pretend that this world is all there is. They will take their houses as their homes and their desires as god. Indeed history

as seen many people as such, but no one remembers them. They have been left in Hell.

So, the ship is waiting, please jump on board! Your Creator Allah (SWT) is calling you:

“Oh man! Surely you must strive to your Lord, a hard striving, until you meet Him. (84:6)

Imam ‘Ali (as) warns of the deceptive nature of this world when he says:

“Regard your stay in the world as very short, and return (to Allah) with the best provision that is with you, because surely, in front of you lies a valley, difficult to climb, and places of stay full of fear and dangers. You have to reach there and stay in them. And know that the eyes of death are approaching towards you. It is as though you are (already) in its claws and it has struck itself against you. Difficult affairs and distressing dangers have crushed you into it. You should therefore cut away all the attachments of this world and assist yourselves with the provision of Allah's fear”^{xi}

CONSEQUENCES OF THE VICE OF THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

The Holy Prophet said:

“One who wakes up with his whole attention directed towards the world is cut off from God, and God shall make four qualities to accompany him;

endless sorrow,

never ending occupation,

a neediness which is never relieved, and

a hope which is never achieved.”^{xii}

Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq said:

“One who passes his evenings and mornings in such a way that the world be his biggest concern, God ordains poverty between his two eyes and causes his affairs to become disjointed and dissipated, while he does not attain anything except what has been apportioned for him. And as for one who passes his evenings and mornings while his biggest concern and goal is the Hereafter, God puts contentment into his heart and gives a wholeness and unity to his affairs.”^{xiii}

HOW DO WE PRACTICE DETACHMENT FROM THIS WORLD?

In order to be successful both in this world and the Hereafter, we have to detach ourselves from this world and understand that everything we have belongs to Allah. We have to use the bounties given to us by Allah to purchase a place in Heaven in the Hereafter. This means that we have to spend our energy, our money and our time not to obtain more pleasure in this world but to obtain everlasting pleasures in the Hereafter. Imam 'Ali (as) also has said:

“The pleasures of this world are like the sun, you will be blinded if you look into it, but using it will enlighten your path”^{xiv}

We can do this by^{xv}:

- 1- Shortening our wishes and desires for this world
- 2- Appreciating every blessing
- 3- Abstaining from *Ḥarām*
- 4- Not being interested in what other people possess

To know if we really are not attached to this *dunyā*, we can test ourselves and see whether we become upset and flustered when we lose something worldly, or if we become extremely happy when we gain something worldly.^{xvi} Remember, this is not limited to money and objects; it also applies to popularity and reputation regarding worldly things.

Homework

Next week, bring to class anything that you are attached to (like mobile phone, PSP, Nintendo DS etc.) and we shall all put these things away for a week so we have no access to them. During that week, we have to avoid thinking about these items and try to detach ourselves from them.

Review Questions

Q1. In the Qur'ān, this world is described as:

- a. Play and idle sport
- b. The true life
- c. The most important life

Q2. In Arabic, the life of this world is called:

- a. Al *Dunyā*
- b. Al *Ākhirah*
- c. Barzakh

LESSON 3: AN INTRODUCTION TO HEAVEN AND HELL

Heaven and Hell are the last stops in the journey of our life. These two places show that there are two destinations where the journey of our life might take us. As we learnt from previous lessons, Heaven is the reward for those who believed in the truth and did good actions, while Hell is the punishment for those who denied, altered or corrupted the truth and did evil actions which resulted in mischief and disorder.

In this lesson we will learn about the features of Heaven and Hell, and see how best we can achieve Heaven and avoid Hell.

HEAVEN AND HELL REFLECT THE REALITIES OF OUR OWN ACTIONS

From an Islamic point of view, each action has a worldly appearance as well as a reality that most of us in this world cannot see. The worldly appearance is what is seen in this world and may or may not be the same as the reality of the action. For example, in the Qur'ān, Allah, The Exalted says, about taking the rights and possessions of orphans:

“Behold, those who sinfully devour the possessions of orphans but fill their bellies with fire: for [in the life to come] they will have to endure a blazing flame!” (4:10)

Also, in another Prophetic saying, it is mentioned that every mention of a Name of Allah, The Exalted, is like a brick, which is used to build your house or palace in Heaven. The more one remembers and recites dhikr the bigger the palace the angels build for him/her in Heaven.

Similarly, our bad actions also reflect the same kind of reaction. Every bad action that we do in reality cancels the good we do. When a person commits certain sins, then the palace that has been built for him or garden that has been prepared will be burnt away and the person will have nothing in the next world.

We therefore see that Heaven and Hell expand or shrink based on our actions – the more good actions we perform, the bigger our place and pleasures in Heaven and vice versa. The existence of both Heaven and Hell are as a result of our choices and actions. If it was not so, then there would be no purpose in being given the ability to know and choose between right and wrong.

A DESCRIPTION OF HEAVEN

It is impossible to describe the real picture of Heaven. Every beautiful thing which we find in this world is lower and of lesser value compared to the bounties of Heaven. The Holy Qur'ān has described Heaven in 76 *āyāt* just to give us some idea of blessings we may enjoy there. However, the reality of Heaven is beyond our imagination. What we know is limited by language and imagination.

The bounties of heaven have been described in the following way:

1. The greatest bliss in the Heaven will be Allah's proximity.
2. The people in Heaven will get in abundance numerous kinds of foods, drinks, fruits and tasty things.
3. The people in Heaven will have full comfort, security, stability. There will be no pain or fear of anything. No death and no disease, no poverty and no distress.
4. The people in Heaven will live in big castles. These castles will have beautiful big gardens, streams, rivers and many other things which we cannot imagine.
5. The people in Heaven will have many kinds of entertainment.
6. The people in Heaven will get anything they would like to have.
7. The people in Heaven will be allowed to visit the Holy Prophet (saw) and Imams (as) and any other person they would like to meet.
8. The people in Heaven can invite The Holy Prophet, Imams and many other people at a time.

The Holy Qur'an and the narrations summarise the blessings of Heaven in the following words:

*"No person knows what enjoyments of the eyes are kept hidden in Heaven for them as a reward for their good deeds."
"I have kept ready for my servants what no eye has ever looked at and no ear has ever heard, nor has any heart ever imagined." Hadith Qudsi*

Thus, all beautiful and precious things of this world are just ordinary samples to give us some idea of Heaven.

A DESCRIPTION OF HELL

Hell is a deep, wide and large pit. It is the last jail in which will be various kinds of punishments, pains, troubles, hardships and calamities. They will be such that we cannot even imagine them. In fact it is exactly opposite to Heaven. There will be no room at all for peace, happiness and comfort. Here are some of the tortures (punishments) the offenders face in Hell, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān.

The food of the people of Hell will be a bitter and thorny fruit called *Zaqqūm*, which will be melted in fire like copper. It is also said that there will be the boiling oil of the olive which will boil in stomach like boiling water. *Zaqqūm* will boil in the stomachs of proud disbelievers like water boiling or like olive oil heated over fierce fire. Then this boiling water will be poured on their heads which will melt all the outer and inner organs of the sinners. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'ān:

"Indeed those who defy our signs, we shall soon make them enter a fire; as often as their skin become scorched, we shall replace them with other skin, so that they may taste the punishment. Indeed Allah is all-mighty, all-wise."

” (4:56)

THE DURATION OF STAY IN HEAVEN OR HELL

It is mentioned in some of our most famous books of narrations that a companion called Abu Hashim asked Imam Sadiq (a.s) why the dwelling in Heaven or Hell will be permanent? The Imam (as) replied:

"The people of Hell will live in Hell forever because their intention in the world was that had they to live in the world forever they would disobey God forever. Likewise the reason of the people of Heaven living there permanently is also that their intention in the world was that if they had to live in the world forever they would always obey God and would never defy his commandments."

So, it is the intention that results in the permanent residents of the people of Heaven in Heaven and the permanent dwelling of the people of Hell in Hell.

However, some punishments are short in duration or less painful while others last longer and more severe. The wrongdoers' sins are not the same either in quantity or quality, and the punishment awarded them also

cannot be the same. There are those who are hardened criminals and deliberate deniers of truth. They are those who will remain in Hell forever. Allah, The Exalted says this in several verses of the Holy Qur'ān, for example:

"Those who engaged in disbelief and called Our signs lies are the people of Hellfire; they shall dwell in it eternally" (2:39)

The verses state that permanent residence in Hellfire will be for those unbelievers for whom all possible opportunity to rescue are blocked. As for those who have committed a certain number of lesser sins and offences, they shall either spend an appropriate amount of time in Hellfire or receive the kindness and forgiveness of God. Therefore there is a possibility that some people will leave Hell after a certain time which only Allah, The Exalted knows.

However, when it comes to residing in Heaven, whoever enters it will remain there forever. This is a sign of the Mercy of Allah, The Exalted, as a person can only enter Heaven if they are in a state of complete purity and this deserves staying in Heaven eternally.

"Who will inherit Heaven: they will dwell therein (for ever)"
(Al-Mu'minun 23:11)

Review Questions

Q1. Once a person enters Heaven:

- They remain there forever
- They might be kicked out later
- They might be removed but let back in

Q2. The description of Heaven that we have is:

- Limited by our imagination and our language, the Reality of Heaven is beyond our imagination
- Better than the reality of Heaven because we imagine it so wonderfully
- Exactly the way the reality of Heaven is

Q3. The greatest bliss in Heaven will be:

- The wonderful large castles from beneath which rivers flow
- The never-ending fruit, drinks and rest
- Being close to Allah (SWT)

LESSON 4: HOPE AND FEAR

In this lesson, we will be discussing hope and fear. We will first try to understand these two concepts.

WHAT IS HOPE?

Hope in a general way is a feeling you get, when your heart is comfortable, relaxed and in peace. It occurs when you are expecting something good to come to you or happen to you. This feeling depends on your goals and desires.

An example of hope is when a person is working towards a job promotion. He is not certain he will get it, but he has a hope which drives him onwards.

Effective hope is hope which is accompanied by work, not an unrealistic hope where one remains idle and says 'I have hope.'

From the Islamic point of view, the lowest goal a believer has hope in, is in the Mercy of Allah, The Exalted, for the forgiveness of his sins.

WHAT IS FEAR?

This is a feeling we have where we are afraid that something bad might happen to us in the future.

This feeling can come about in many ways. A good example is when the people of a town are warned a flood is coming to their town by the weather bureau. Their fear motivates them to put up sandbags and levies to prevent water from destroying their homes and property. This is beneficial fear, it drives a person to avoid or flee from the thing they fear. Simply saying one fears something without fleeing from it or taking precautions against it is not beneficial fear.

From an Islamic perspective fear can come about for example, when you read about the punishment of the sinners in the Hell fire, you begin to fear that something like that can happen to you too. A Muslim should fear no one but Allah (SWT), and this will allow him to fear nothing in this world:

"He who fears Allah, Allah will make all others fear him, and He who does not fear Allah, Allah will make him fear everything"^{xvii}

A BALANCE OF HOPE AND FEAR

“A slave will not be a believer, unless he is fearful and hopeful”^{xviii}

We need hope to motivate us to achieve our goals and we need fear to prevent us from being careless and irresponsible. For example, before a test, a person has both fear and hope. The fear motivates the person to study and work extra hard to make sure they don't fail, while hope of succeeding and the reward of doing well also motivates a person to do the same.

In the same way, believers hope for the Mercy and reward of Allah, The Exalted, but at the same time fear the result of disobeying Allah. Hope helps us achieve our lawful desires, but at the same time fear of punishment helps us police ourselves and avoid making mistakes.

Hope alone, without fear, will cause us to follow our desires without observing the boundaries placed by Allah and this will result in us committing many sins. If you look at the Christian belief, it only teaches hope and its followers don't fear doing bad deeds because they falsely believe that they will be forgiven for everything.

Similarly, fear alone is also dangerous as it will prevent us from acting and achieving our goals, from making changes to our past mistakes and improving our future. Fear alone makes a person quit trying to improve him/herself and this results in the person continuing to commit sins. Therefore, despair is caused by fear alone and is a great sin itself.

Thus hope and fear together are often seen like the two wings of a bird. For a believer who is moving towards perfection and nearness to Allah, The Exalted, it is the wings of hope and fear that help him/her achieve that. Imam al-Ṣādiq reminds us that we have to have true fear and hope, and that is that:

“A person who hopes for something seeks it (by working for it) and a person who fears something flees from it”^{xix}

HOW TO DEVELOP A BALANCE OF FEAR AND HOPE

This can be done by looking at both sides of achieving our goals. The benefit of the goal is what creates hope in us, and the possible risk involved on that path creates fear in us. Once we see both sides, we can

decide properly on a certain goal and can do it carefully and responsibly.

From an Islamic point of view, it is necessary for us to keep in mind the rewards of doing good deeds. At the same time, we should be also aware of the punishments of disobeying Allah, The Exalted, so we don't become proud of our good deeds.^{xx}

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says: “Fear Allah in such a way that you would not dare to disobey Him, and have hope in Allah in such a way that you would not despair from His Mercy”^{xxi}

Review Questions

Q1. A believer:

- Has more fear than hope
- Has more hope than fear
- Has a balance of hope and fear

Q2. Allah (SWT) promises a believer that if he fears Allah only:

- God will make him afraid of everything
- God will make everything afraid of him
- God will leave him alone

ⁱ Quran - “The measure of which is thousand years of what you count” (32:5) also “the measure of which is fifty thousand years” (70:5)

ⁱⁱ The Hereafter (Ma’ad)- Ayatollah Dastghaib Shirazi also supported in the Quran “and what they never thought of shall become plain to them from Allah” (39:47)

ⁱⁱⁱ There are number of Ayaat in the Quran providing this proof. For instance see: 15: 85, 23:115.

^{iv} Al Ma’aad- Ayatollah Dastghaib Shirazi- Page 95

^v “**And when Ibrahim said: My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead, He said: What! and do you not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He said: Then take four of the birds, then train them to follow you, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying; and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.**” (2:260) Commentary from Sayyid Mahdi Pooya <http://www.al-islam.org/quran/>

^{vi} Ma’aad Pg. 109

^{vii} Ibid. Page 113

^{viii} Ibid Page 116

^{ix} Ibid- Page 138

^x Teachers can talk about the story of Qarun (28:76-79) as has been discussed in previous years.

^{xi} Najhul Balagah Sermon- 203

^{xii} Jami’ As Sa’adat

^{xiii} Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi (Tehran), Vol. IV, p.8

^{xiv} Nahjul balagha sermon?

^{xv} eHawza- Practical Irfan Semester 2- Lesson on Zuhd

^{xvi} “So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you; and Allah does not love any arrogant boaster” (57:23)

^{xvii} Mishkatul Anwar, n. 582

^{xviii} Mishkatul Anwar, n. 588

^{xix} Mishkatul Anwar, n. 584

^{xx} References

Mishkat ul Anwar Fi Ghurar al Akhbaar (section 3, chapter 4, no. 593, p 298)

Basic Beliefs of Islam, Sayyed Kamoounpuri PhD, page 149 – 150

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^{xxi} Mishkatul Anwar, m. 590