

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 13 March 2013 21:09 - Last Updated Friday, 15 March 2013 00:15

'What happens when I die?' This question has been asked by humans throughout the ages. Islam holds that death is not the end of existence, rather a stage in a human's life. This life is a test for humans to see whether or not they choose to follow God's guidance and act in a way that will please Him, or ignore His signs and warnings and instead choose to disobey Him. Based on their decisions and actions in this temporary life, human beings will be judged and their fate, the way they spend the rest of their lives, will depend on whether their good deeds outweighed their bad ones.

Paradise is the reward for the righteous, and Hell the eternal abode for those who denied and transgressed God's rulings. Although we should be aiming to do good so that God is pleased with us, not just for reward, God in His wisdom knows that human beings need incentives and deterrents, thus the promise of Paradise and the threat of Hell help humans to strive in the way of goodness and obedience.

'Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allah is greater. It is that which is the great attainment.' [9:72]

Once a person has died they enter a stage known as the Barzakh, their body is no longer alive, but their soul lives on in another dimension, in the World of the Unseen. At the end of Time, God will give the command for the Trumpet to be blown signaling the Day of Resurrection, when all human beings will be raised to life again.

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'How can you disbelieve in Allah? Seeing that you were dead and He gave you life. Then He will give you death, then again will bring you to life (on the Day of Resurrection) and then unto Him you will return.' [2:28]

Each person will be presented with a record of their life's deeds, recorded by two angels who were sat on their shoulders (See the page on Belief in Angels for more information). Following this each person will be judged by God.

'How (will it be) when We gather them together on the Day about which there is no doubt (i.e. the Day of Resurrection). And each person will be paid in full what he has earned? And they will not be dealt with unjustly.' [3:25]

God as the Judge is fair, and Forgiving. Over His Throne is written: 'My Mercy outweighs my Anger.' If a person repented for their sins, no matter how many, in this life God promises forgiveness.

Allah the Almighty has said: "O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as its."
[Hadith]

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Indeed there are many opportunities for a person to wipe away a lifetime's worth of sins if they are truly sincere. When a person enters Islam, for example, in order to allow them a fresh start, God wipes away all previous sins they may have committed. It is then up to them to ensure they keep their record clean.

"O you who have believed, repent to Allah with sincere repentance. Perhaps your Lord will remove from you your misdeeds and admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow [on] the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him. Their light will proceed before them and on their right; they will say, "Our Lord, perfect for us our light and forgive us. Indeed, You are over all things competent." [66:8]

Life after Death lasts forever. A person may therefore either be destined for Heaven or Hell depending on their deeds. Some people are sent to Hell for eternity but these are the lowest of people. Others are sent to Hell for a period of time to cleanse them of their sins before they can enter Paradise, like gold ore is burned before it becomes pure.

Many descriptions of Heaven and Hell are given in the Qur'an and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet):

'And will reward them for what they patiently endured [with] a garden [in Paradise] and silk [garments]. [They will be] reclining therein on adorned couches. They will not see therein any [burning] sun or [freezing] cold. And near above them are its shades, and its [fruit] to be picked will be lowered in compliance. And there will be circulated among them vessels of silver and cups having been [created] clear [as glass], Clear glasses [made] from silver of which they have

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determined the measure. And they will be given to drink a cup [of wine] whose mixture is of ginger [from] a fountain within Paradise named Salsabeel. There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. When you see them, you would think them [as beautiful as] scattered pearls. And when you look there [in Paradise], you will see pleasure and great dominion. Upon the inhabitants will be green garments of fine silk and brocade. And they will be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord will give them a purifying drink.' [76:12-21]

“And whosoever disobeys God and His Messenger, then surely, for him is the fire of Hell, he shall dwell therein forever.” (Quran 72:23)